Honoria

THE

FEMALE MENTOR:

OR,

SELECT CONVERSATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1793.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

MRS. M. HARTLEY,

BELVIDERE, BATH.

MADAM,

I AM unknown to the world, and I wiſh to continue ſo: I am not unknown to you, having been long happy in your friendſhip and regard. If the following CONVERSATIONS ſhould afford you ſome amuſement, and if you ſhould think them calculated to

lead the youthful and unbiaſſed mind in the ways of virtue, I ſhall feel highly gratified.

I am, Madam,
Your's with
Sincerity and Eſteem,

HONORIA.

London,
JANUARY 10th, 1793.

INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN I venture to offer theſe little volumes to the Public, I do not pretend to be an author, but only an editor. I have the happineſs of being the daughter of Amanda. She is the mother of a numerous offſpring, and while we were yet children ſhe endeavoured to inſtil inſtruction into our tender minds by relating either moral or religious tales, and by entering into a courſe of reading, which while it inculcated a leſſon, was calculated to engage our attention.

We were accuſtomed to aſſemble frequently in the afternoons for our recreation and improvement, and Amanda never checked our innocent vivacity. Some of her intimate friends,

perceiving how greatly theſe meetings improved her children, ſolicited that ſome of theirs might occaſionally be admitted. Telemachus was a favourite book in our ſociety; and it happened one day that Amanda conveyed her advice to one of the children in ſo forcible a manner, that the child was ſtruck with the truth of her remarks, and ſaid, artleſsly "Indeed, madam, I will "always follow your advice, for you are "our *Female Mentor*." The children were all delighted with the juſtneſs of the application, and from that time Amanda was known by the name of the Female Mentor.

As we advanced in years, the converſation became more and more intereſting. New members were added to our meeting; men of genius and abilities favoured us with their company: ſome of our youthful companions

panions married, and brought new acquiſitions in their huſband and wives. Thus this meeting, which at firſt conſiſted only of children, gradually ſwelled into an improving and rational ſociety.

Yet the members ſtill bear in mind the original inſtitution; and as many of our preſent females are young ladies juſt coming into life, we ſtill principally adapt our converſations to their improvement, and under the auſpices of Amanda aſſemble every fortnight.

The members who are more advanced in age, endeavour to bring their ſhare of the entertainment: biographical anecdotes, hiſtorical relations, moral and religious reflections, now and then a copy of verſes, eſſays on various ſubjects, and acts of humanity and benevolence, are heard with pleaſure.

We have been lately flattered by ſo-

licitations from ſeveral families to admit more members: an honour we are under the neceſſity of declining, from an apprehenſion of rendering our ſociety too numerous. For this reaſon I have undertaken the office of editor, and propoſe to render our meeting more general, by communicating to the public ſome of our moſt intereſting converſations. By theſe means, thoſe amiable perſons who wiſhed to become members, may be in part initiated into this ſociety. To them, therefore, and to young ladies in general, I preſent this work, under the title of *The Female Mentor*, fully ſenſible, that the only claim it can have for the approbation of the public is that it is founded on TRUTH and NATURE, and intended to promote the cauſe of RELIGION and VIRTUE.

HONORIA.

A Serious thought ſtanding ſingle among many of a lighter nature, will ſometimes ſtrike the careleſs wanderer after amuſement only, with uſeful awe: as monumental marbles ſcattered in a wide pleaſure-garden (and ſuch there are) will call to recollection thoſe who would never have ſought it in a church-yard walk of mournful yews.

Young on Original Compoſition,
page 267.

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CONVERSATION I.

On the Influence of Education.

THE firſt CONVERSATION was opened by a lady, who propoſed reading an extraordinary character in Sully's memoirs, which ſhe thought could not fail of engaging the attention of the company.

"THE young man, whoſe name was Servin, was at once a miracle and a monſter. He had ſo lively a genius, that there was ſcarcely any kind of knowledge which he had not obtained, and ſo retentive a memory that he never forgot whatever he had acquired; he

was maſter of philoſophy, mathematics, and mechanics; and was particularly converſant in drawing and fortification. He had even acquired ſuch a knowledge in theology, that he could become an excellent preacher and active controverſialiſt, either for, or againſt the reformed religion. He not only underſtood Greek, Latin, and all the learned languages, but likewiſe moſt of the different dialects with their various pronunciations and accents, as well in France as in the other parts of Europe; which aided by a perfect imitation of the manners and geſtures of the natives, made him be conſidered as an inhabitant of different countries. He was an admirable buffoon, and an inimitable actor; he compoſed excellent verſes, underſtood the theory of muſic, could play upon moſt inſtruments, and ſing agreeably as well as

 metho-

methodically; he performed maſs, for he was as anxious to do as to know every thing. His perſon was perfectly correſpondent to his character; he was ſupple, dexterous, active, and calculated for every exerciſe; he was a tolerable horſeman, an excellent dancer, leaper, and wreſtler, and was converſant in cards, and in all games of recreation.

"Reverſe the medal—he was an intolerable lyar, a traitor, a coward, a ſharper, a drunkard, a glutton, a gameſter, a debauchee, a blaſphemer, an atheiſt; in a word, in him was aſſembled every vice contrary to honour and religion, which he continued to practice till he finiſhed his career in the flower of his age, in a houſe of ill fame, with a glaſs in his hand, ſwearing, and denying God."

When the lady had finiſhed reading,

it was debated; whether if Servin had been carefully educated he might not have turned out an amiable character. Various were the opinions given upon the ſubject: ſome perſons aſſerted that vice was ſo inherent in particular diſpoſitions, that it was impoſſible with any care and attention to eradicate the evil. Amanda thought differently, and believed that no characters in early infancy could be ſo naturally depraved, as not to be capable of being extremely improved, if not rendered totally amiable, by inſtilling the precepts of the goſpel, and by ſetting before them excellent examples.

A gentleman aſſerted, that according to the preſent mode of education amongſt the higher ranks, or thoſe who choſe to imitate their example, every thing was attended to with more zeal than religion; the whole

bent

bent of education being to teach variety of languages, to give perſonal accompliſhment, and exterior graces. By this method, young minds were too much ſoftened and refined, unleſs they had the aid of religion to give ſtability to their character, and prevent their falling into exceſſes which their inclination might lead them to indulge. He continued, "I ſhould like to col-
"lect a certain number of gentlemen's
"children; the girls being educated at
"a boarding ſchool or under ſome
"well eſteemed governeſs; the boys
"brought up at a public ſchool; and
"alſo aſſemble the ſame number of
"poor children who have been two or
"three years at a Sunday ſchool, and
"I would ſeparately queſtion them re-
"lative to their knowledge of the
"principles of our religion. I will
"venture to ſay, that the poor chil-

" dren will in general give more ſatiſ-
" factory anſwers than the rich; and
" we muſt ſurely agree, in that caſe, that
" genteel perſons ſadly neglect their off-
" ſpring, if they do not employ at leaſt a
" ſmall part of one day in a week upon
" the moſt important ſubject of educa-
" tion; namely, religion. The earlieſt
" impreſſions are always the ſtrongeſt,
" and therefore religious ſubjects ought
" to be firſt ſtamped on the mind: I will
" not preſume to ſay, that inſtilling
" religious precepts into young perſons
" will always form amiable characters;
" but this I will venture to affirm, that
" it often will have the deſired effect;
" and thoſe who neglect this method,
" raiſe their building on the weakeſt in-
" ſtead of the ſtrongeſt foundation. I
" beg leave to read to the preſent com-
" pany the following extraordinary fact,
" which is taken from the duke of St.

" Simon's

"Simon's memoirs, and which I flat-
"ter myſelf will not be found inappli-
"cable to the preſent ſubject:

"The duke of Burgundy was born with ſo untractable a diſpoſition, that it was apprehended, ſhould he attain the age of maturity, he would be the ſcourge of mankind. He was ſevere in his diſpoſition and fiery in his temper, even venting the utmoſt extravagance of paſſion againſt the elements and inanimate things when they oppoſed his inclinations; for he would break the clocks when they ſtruck the hour which ſummoned him to an irkſome employment, and would vent his fury againſt the rain, when it interfered with his pleaſure. He was obſtinate to an exceſs, paſſionately fond of wine and all other voluptuous pleaſures; he was enamoured of the chace, and extravagantly fond of gaming, and when he

loſt, he was beyond all power of controul. He was naturally ſtern, barbarous in his raillery, oppreſſing with the moſt poignant ridicule, perſons, whoſe failings ought rather to have inſpired his compaſſion. If he could perceive the ſmalleſt weakneſs in the arguments of any of his teachers, he would immediately take advantage of it, and reaſon deeper than they: his wit and penetration ſhone through all the faults of his character; even in his anger his repartees were aſtoniſhing. The extent and ſagacity of his underſtanding were prodigious, and led him conſtantly to apply to two things at the ſame time, for one ſtudy ſeemed too little for his attention; the moſt abſtract ſciences were quite play to him. He was ſo proud, that he regarded himſelf equal to the heavens, and looked upon men in general, as mere

mere atoms in the univerſe when compared with himſelf, however exalted their ſtation, or however great their abilities: even his brothers ſcarcely appeared to him as intermediate beings between himſelf and the generality of the human ſpecies. He would often be ſenſible of his faults, and acknowledge them; and ſometimes with ſo much vexation, that it would recal his furious paſſions.

"Fenelon, Fleury his preceptor, Moreau his firſt valet de chambre, who was much ſuperior to his ſtation, and ſeveral other attendants who were choſen inſtruments to aſſiſt, all united under the direction of the duke of Beauvilliers, his governor, to work upon this very eccentric and dangerous genius; and the Divine Being aſſiſting their endeavours, they brought their fruit nearly to perfection about the ſixteenth year

of

of his age. From this impetuous character arose a prince affable, mild, humane, moderate, patient, modest, humble, austere towards himself, benevolent to others; zealous to fulfil all the duties of his exalted station, to unite those of a son and a subject, and to be worthy of his future destination to rule a kingdom.

"It must naturally be supposed that this great change of character was formed by gradual and imperceptible degrees. Religion made the first and strongest impression upon his mind, and led him to attempt the amendment of his faults: but on his first endeavours he appeared morose and unamiable; for having once been subdued by the attractions of pleasure, the fear of falling into the same error made him fly from even the most innocent enjoyments. He secluded himself in his own apartment as an impenetrable asylum; he there

there contracted a fondneſs for the abſtract ſciences; and his facility in acquiring them, and the pleaſure ariſing from the ſtudy, led him at firſt to neglect attaining a knowledge of ſtate affairs: he declined performing thoſe ceremonies, and giving that attendance which are neceſſary in a court, and particularly for a perſon of his high ſtation, who was one day to wear the crown. Louis the fourteenth ſaw with aſtoniſhment ſo young a prince indirectly cenſure his conduct by the ſtrict regularity of his own life, and refuſe a new piece of furniture which he had been very deſirous of poſſeſſing, in order to give the money it would have coſt to the poor.

"His ſecluded way of life, however, excited diſguſt. The courtiers abhorred the duke of Burgundy, when he was uncontroulable in his infancy; and were ready to deſpiſe him in his efforts

efforts towards amendment. The prince felt this contempt; but being religiouſly diſpoſed, he experienced, amidſt the general opprobrium, a heart-felt ſatisfaction, which he derived from the bitter recollection of his late pride.

"He was moſt ſenſibly ſhocked at the diſlike of his own family; his rigid conduct drew on him the advice of the king, the remonſtrances of Madame de Maintenon, and eſtranged his father's affections: he could not avoid ſeeing the avowed preference given to his brother the duke of Berry, who was cheriſhed and applauded, while he was treated as a ſtranger; and was ſtill more affected on obſerving a general dread diffuſed among the people, who ſeemed to anticipate the evil of being governed by a ſovereign of ſo churliſh and moroſe a character.

"His own rectitude and good ſenſe; his

his ſcruple of diſpleaſing the king, diſguſting his father, and of giving to the world in general a diſtaſte for virtue, operated ſtill ſtronger on his mind. The rough and hard bark of the tree ſoftened itſelf by degrees, without injuring the ſolidity of the trunk. He at laſt comprehended, that ſolid piety is not ſufficient to ſupply the place of active virtue, and that fulfilling the duties of the ſituation wherein we are placed, will alone render us acceptable to God.

"Induced by theſe reflexions he began to apply himſelf ſeriouſly to gain all the neceſſary information relative to the well governing of a kingdom; and he gave up a certain portion of his time to the forms of the court and the world; this he did with ſo natural an air and grace, that the court and the world ſoon began to be pleaſed with him, as he became affable and condeſcending.

"His

"His character as a ſoldier was equally admirable; during two campaigns his valour, liberality, and attention to the wounded, rendered him generally admired and beloved. At his return from the army after the death of his father, the king veſted great authority in him, and buſineſs and favour were diſpenſed through his hand. From this time he redoubled his application in acquiring knowledge reſpecting the affairs of government; he abridged his prayers, and ſcarcely allowed himſelf time to purſue his favourite ſtudy of the ſciences. He redoubled his attentions to the king, and his aſſiduities to his wife, and cheerfully performed all the forms of etiquette, as the neceſſary duties of his high ſtation. The more the king exalted him, the more humble he appeared; as he felt his own conſequence and importance increaſe, his deſire

ſire to obtain knowledge, and to acquire moderation, augmented at the ſame time.

"With all theſe excellencies, this admirable prince did not fail to ſhew that he was a man; namely, that he had ſome faults; and when thoſe who approached his perſon ſaw his failings, they could hardly comprehend why he was not perfect: they had forgotten that his original diſpoſition had been deformed by paſſions and vices; nor did they reflect what painful efforts he muſt have made to have produced this prodigious change of character. But his errors were like ſpots in the ſun, which were perceived only by diſcerning eyes, but did not really diminiſh his ſplendour. He always remembered the great and noble maxim inculcated by the amiable Fenelon, that kings were reſponſible for their actions to the people. Impreſſed with theſe ideas,

ideas, war and luxury were obnoxious to him; he would ſometimes explain himſelf too freely upon theſe topics; particularly upon war; a truth that intereſted perſons could not but feel, though they were not always ready to acknowledge.

"His converſation was equally ſolid and agreeable, and when a proper opportunity of entering into intereſting ſubjects occurred, he was then moſt delightful. If he found any one with whom he could converſe on the ſciences, that was his greateſt pleaſure; but he only ſeemed to wiſh to amuſe himſelf, not to endeavour to ſhine, for he differted little and heard more; his principal aim was to gain uſeful intelligence, to be informed of the marine, the commerce of foreign kingdoms, of hiſtorical facts, and of memorable events in former and preſent times. During ſuch converſations he

he derived great inſtruction and information, conciliated all hearts, and all minds, and raiſed the higheſt expectations of his talents and capacity. He choſe to play a low ſtake at cards, in order to draw people of ſmall fortune into his company, and to render himſelf more acceptable. He always continued fond of the pleaſures of the chace and of the table; the former he indulged in without ſcruple, but he was afraid of entering too much into the latter; though when he did aſſemble with his friends he was moſt excellent company.

"Having attained the age of twenty, beloved and eſteemed by all, who with reaſon expected that he would ſhine in the character of a ſovereign; his wife, the ducheſs of Burgundy, on whom he doated, was ſeized with the ſmall pox, and died after a few days illneſs. He bore

this afflicting ſtroke with calmneſs and compoſure, but he bled in the midſt of his reſignation. His days were prematurely abridged; he caught the ſame diſtemper which had hurried his wife to the grave, and which proved equally fatal to him.

"He acted in the laſt ſcene conſiſtently with the wonderful virtue and dignity of his character. From the firſt ſeizure, he had not the leaſt hope of recovery; but his ſoul roſe ſuperior to both ſufferings and death, and his example conveys a ſtriking leſſon of the advantages of piety. In his laſt moments he expreſſed the moſt perfect ſubmiſſion to the divine will, the higheſt ſenſe of the divine mercy, the keeneſt reflexions upon his own unworthineſs, and the moſt noble confidence in God's infinite goodneſs. His profound compoſure, his invincible pa-

tience under the moſt excruciating ſufferings, his mild and uniform attention to all his attendants, diſplayed the firmneſs of his mind, and his univerſal benevolence raiſed his ſoul to heaven.

"France fell under this laſt chaſtiſement; God ſhewed her a prince that ſhe did not deſerve; the earth did not deſerve him; he was fit only for eternity."

CONVERSATION 2.

Sketch of the Life of Fenelon.

ATTICUS, a clergyman of our ſociety, ſaid that he had heard with pleaſure the Duke de St. Simon's account of the change of character in the duke of Burgundy, and as he could not conceive how ſuch a change could have been effected in any perſon, much leſs in a prince, the heir of an abſolute monarchy, he had, from motives of curioſity, examined the memoirs of thoſe times that could give any inſight into ſo extraordinary a tranſaction. He had found that the whole plan had been formed and executed by the amiable and virtuous Fenelon, the preceptor to the duke of Burgundy; whom the duke de St. Simon did not love, and therefore did not ſufficiently appreciate his merits.

rits. Atticus added, that he had drawn up for his own amuſement, a ſketch of the life of Fenelon, which he would read to the company; and though he was convinced, that any remarks on the life and character of ſo great a man did not require any apology, yet he would preface his imperfect account with a paſſage from la Harpe's Eloge de Fenelon.

Fenelon eſt parmi les gens de lettres, ce que Henry IV. eſt parmi les rois. Sa reputation eſt un depôt conſervé par notre amour; et ſon panegyriſte, quel qu'il ſoit, eſt ſurpaſſé d'avance par la ſenſibilité de ceux qui l'écoutent.

FRANCIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE FENELON, of a noble and diſtinguiſhed family in the country of Perigord, was ſon of Pons de Salignac marquis de Fenelon, and was born in

the caſtle of Fenelon in 1667. He received private inſtruction in his father's houſe, until he had attained the age of twelve, when he was removed to the univerſity of Cahors, and completed his ſtudies at Paris, under the ſuperintendence of his uncle, Anthony marquis of Fenelon, of whom the great Condé uſed to ſay, that he equally ſhone in converſation, in a campaign, and in the cabinet.

Under ſuch a director, by whom he was treated with all the tenderneſs of a ſon, Fenelon greatly improved the talents and capacity which he had received from nature. Being deſtined for the church, he ſoon diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the line of his profeſſion, and aſſumed the eccleſiaſtical habit, as is uſual with young men in the Roman Catholic religion, at a very early period of life: before he had attained his twentieth year, he preached at Paris

with

with ſuch general applauſe, as attracted even the notice of Boſſuet and Bourdaloue, the moſt celebrated divines of the age. But his uncle, apprehending leſt indiſcriminate praiſe might ſwell the youth with preſumption, perſuaded him to retire from public view, and continue his theological ſtudies; and Fenelon gave a ſtrong proof of diſcretion and ſelf denial in following his uncle's advice. But in retiring from the world, he only rendered himſelf more worthy of it: he applied with unremitting zeal to the ſtudy of divinity, and the cultivation of polite literature, under the direction of the ſuperior of the convent of St. Sulpicius, and was remarkable for the ſtrictneſs of his conduct in that early period of life.

At the age of twenty-four he entered into full orders, and gave, at that early period, ſuch proofs of exemplary piety and

diſcretion, that in the twenty-ſeventh year of his age he was entruſted, by the archbiſhop of Paris, with an office which required the ſtricteſt conduct and judgment; that of Superior to the newly converted catholic women. Theſe were for the moſt part young women, converted, as it was called, probably by terror, or importunity, who required to be confirmed in a belief which was contrary to the religious principles in which they had been educated. Nor was any one more adapted to this employment than Fenelon; as no one better knew how to temper the authority of his miſſion by the moſt gentle manners, and to accommodate all the arguments of his warm and perſuaſive eloquence to the temper and delicacy of his female converts.

His great ſucceſs in this miniſtry ſpread wide his reputation, and rendered

dered him known to Louis the Fourteenth. Occupied with the chimerical idea of aboliſhing by force, throughout his dominions, the reformed religion, that monarch ſelected Fenelon to undertake a miſſion in the provinces of Saintonge and Aunis, for the converſion of heretics. Fenelon, inſtead of flattering his deluded ſovereign by an abject ſubmiſſion, refuſed to undertake the office, if it was to be ſupported by military force: he boldly declared that he would convert only by perſuaſion and arguments, not by perſecution and the ſword; and that he would repreſent God not as an object of terror, but as the benevolent father of his creatures. Even the bigotted monarch approved of that liberality of ſentiment which he wanted himſelf; and it was owing to the ſpirit and toleration of Fenelon, that two provinces were exempted from the

dreadful

dreadful perſecutions, which deluged with blood the other parts of France.

On his return to Paris, after having preſented himſelf once at court, he reſumed his former office, and continued his inſtructions to the new converts. His great talents and ſtrict morals opened to him the proſpect of the higheſt preferment; but he was ſo inattentive in paying his court to thoſe in power, that having been named by the king for the biſhoprick of Poitiers, his nomination was revoked before it was made public. But his reputation as a preacher, a good man, and a ſcholar, increaſed to ſuch a degree, that without the leaſt ſolicitation on his part, he was appointed preceptor to the dukes of Burgundy and Berry. He owed this appointment ſolely to the Duke of Beauvilliers, governor of the young princes; who was ſo ſtruck with his

his talents and fascinated with the charms of his conversation, that he recommended him as the only person who was capable of this important trust.

Fenelon entered with enthusiasm on this laborious and delicate office. To give up his own comforts, and to devote himself solely to the government of his pupil; not to utter a word which was not a lesson, not to perform an action which was not an example; to remind him of his high station, that he might lay before him its duties; to annihilate his pride; to combat those passions which flattery encourages, and eradicate those vices which are peculiar to a court; to reprove him without losing his confidence, to correct him without forfeiting his friendship; to add to the consciousness of his duty, and to diminish the consciousness of his power; in a word, never to deceive his pupil, his country,

country, nor his conſcience: ſuch were the duties which were impoſed on himſelf by Fenelon; to whom the monarch ſaid, "I give you my ſon," and to whom the people cried, "Give us a father."

Fenelon had the addreſs to conciliate all the principal perſons who were employed in the education and houſehold of the prince; to perſuade them to follow the grand principles and method, which he had laid down, and to leave him abſolute maſter of the whole mode of proceeding. The utmoſt concert and harmony reigned amongſt them; there was no ſtruggle for ſuperiority; no jealouſy; no one attempted to flatter the prince, or to ſupport him, when he had acted wrong.

His plan for the education of the duke of Burgundy was a maſter-piece of judgment; only calculated, perhaps, for the education of a prince, and peculiarly

culiarly adapted to the temper and diſpoſition of his royal pupil. When he was promoted to the charge, he found his pupil haughty, imperious, paſſionate; or rather furious to exceſs, upon the moſt trifling oppoſition to his will. Inſtead of endeavouring to combat this paſſion by arguments, or advice, Fenelon ordered, that on thoſe occaſions, his ſtudies and amuſements ſhould be immediately ſuſpended; that all who approached him, ſhould wear an air of the deepeſt melancholy, and maintain the moſt profound ſilence. The young prince finding himſelf thus avoided by all, diſguſted with his own company, and conſidered as unworthy of any rational occupation, never failed to acknowledge his fault, and requeſt his preceptor's forgiveneſs. Fenelon received his repentance with complacency; gently repreſented to him, that ſuch

violent

violent paſſions would render himſelf unhappy, no leſs than thoſe about him; and that he would become, by his caprices and fury, an object of conſternation and terror.

Although Fenelon had formed a regular ſyſtem of education, yet he concealed that plan in the moſt judicious manner; and though every thing was in reality the effect of deſign, it appeared the effect of chance, and derived from the caſual impulſe of the preſent moment. He had no regular hours for application; yet all hours and all places were made ſubſervient to the prince's improvement and inſtruction: at dinner or at play, riding or walking, or in company, his curioſity was continually excited by caſual hints, and remarks introduced in the courſe of the moſt deſultory converſation: theſe hints led to queſtions and explanations; at the

prince's

prince's deſire a map was to be examined, or a hiſtory conſulted; and his ſtudies were uſually the reſult of his own requeſt, and conſidered as marks of favour and condeſcenſion. Thus, by the imperious force of education, Fenelon transformed his royal pupil into a new creature, rendered him from the moſt haughty, the moſt humble, from the moſt ungovernable, the moſt eaſy of controul, and from the moſt paſſionate and furious, the meekeſt of mankind.

Fenelon adopted another mode of inſtruction, which few preceptors would be capable of employing. Upon any incident or ſituation, which was either calculated to correct any failing, or to recommend any particular virtue, he wrote a tale, a fable, or a dialogue of the dead. In theſe works Fenelon inculcated, that crooked policy in a ſovereign always recoils upon itſelf; that

that to deceive his ſubjects, or his enemies, is not only immoral but prejudicial; that greatneſs, which is purchaſed with crimes, yields neither glory nor happineſs; that tyranny is more baneful to the ſovereign than to the ſubject; that a prince can only find happineſs and ſecurity in the love of his people; that the complaints of ſubjection, and the cries of misfortune, if rejected, aſcend to the throne of God; that the glory of a wiſe and pacific prince is more ſolid than that of an unjuſt conqueror; that the frenzy of wars is the epidemic diſtemper of kings and miniſters: and that, except under the preſſure of natural calamities, in times of peſtilence and famine, it is the fault of thoſe who govern, if the ſubject is unhappy.—Such were the noble maxims of policy which are ſcattered in *the Dialogues of the Dead*; a work

work filled with the ſoundeſt remarks of hiſtory, and the pureſt principles of government in the *Directions for the Conſcience of a King*, which has been juſtly ſtyled the catechiſm of princes; and more particularly in *Telemachus*, that maſter-piece of his genius, one of the moſt original works which ever appeared in the French tongue.

So great was the moderation of Fenelon, that he continued eight years at court, with no other benefice than a ſmall priory, and without ſoliciting any mark of favour. At length the king beſtowed upon him the abbey of St. Valery, accompanied with an excuſe for having ſo long neglected him, and for giving him ſo ſmall a piece of preferment. Not long afterwards he promoted him to the archbiſhopric of Cambray; and when Fenelon declined accepting it, leſt he ſhould not be able

to reconcile the duties of his dioceſe with the functions of his preceptorſhip, the king aſſured him, that as the education of the princes was almoſt concluded, he might paſs nine months in the year at Cambray. On accepting this promotion he reſigned the abbey of Valery; and when the king preſſed him to retain it, he anſwered, that "as the revenues of the archbiſhopric were fully "adequate to his expences, he had no "right to keep what would be the "means of providing for a deſerving "perſon." But while this virtuous prelate was giving theſe proofs of his moderation and diſintereſtedneſs, and was preparing a king for his country, he was ſuddenly removed from his office, and baniſhed from court.

Several cauſes contributed to his diſgrace. Perfection is not the portion of mankind; and even the moſt exalted

exalted characters are not exempted from the foibles incident to our nature. Yet it may be remarked with truth, that not unfrequently thoſe very foibles, which bring down men of the greateſt capacity to a level with the common race of mortals, render them more intereſting, particularly when they proceed from extreme ſenſibility, or from goodneſs of heart. Such were the foibles of Fenelon. He was captivated with the viſionary and enthuſiaſtic tenets of the celebrated madame de Guion; a woman of an exalted imagination, and of irreproachable character; whoſe ſpiritual ideas of devotion he ſupported, in the conferences held at Iſſy to condemn them, and in a book entitled, *An Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints*, without mentioning her name. The publication of this book occaſioned his religious

principles to be ſuſpected; a ſudden and violent clamour was raiſed againſt the author, Fenelon was publickly accuſed of fanaticiſm and quietiſm, and the cauſe was carried to Rome, to be decided by the Pope.

To enter into a minute detail of the theological diſputes which this controverſy occaſioned, would be highly unintereſting: it will be ſufficient to obſerve, that the opinions of Fenelon, however exalted and extravagant, were the effuſions of a pure heart and warm imagination; the opinions of a man, who, himſelf diſintereſted, deſcribed the love of God as highly pure, to be entertained for the ſake of God alone, without the leaſt regard to our own happineſs, nor even to our ſalvation and condemnation.

His myſtic opinions, however, were not the ſole reaſon of his diſgrace: the education which Fenelon gave to the duke

duke of Burgundy, was an indirect disapprobation of the conduct of Louis the fourteenth. The noble principles of government inculcated in Telemachus deeply wounded the heart of that proud monarch, who saw, or thought he saw, the secret censures of his despotism and ambition; and it was justly remarked, that the heresy of the archbishop of Cambray was in politics, and not in theology.

Fenelon supported the persecution with equal firmness and moderation. While he persevered in disavowing the consequences which had been drawn from his principles; while he persisted in refusing to make a recantation, which might have prevented his disgrace; he declared, that although he could never be induced to yield to his adversaries, who gave a false interpretation of his doctrines, he would not resist the au-

thority of the ſee of Rome, which had the right to judge his opinions. He expected that deciſion, with the moſt profound ſubmiſſion; he neither complained of the virulent abuſes thrown out againſt him, nor of the intrigues employed to diſgrace him; and even forbade his agent at Rome to employ intrigue againſt intrigue: he himſelf never deſcended to invective or altercation; and when Boſſuet called him an heretic and a blaſphemer, he mildly replied, "why do you load me with abuſe, "inſtead of argument? is it becauſe "you take my arguments for abuſe!"

But all his ſervices were forgotten: he received an order to retire to Cambray; his friends were exiled; his relations deprived of their employments. The decree of his condemnation was extorted from Rome with ſuch modifications, that the inexorable Boſſuet com-

complained, that it was not ſufficiently ſevere. His enemies did not yet conſider his triumph as complete, but in continuing their perſecution they did not foreſee, that they were preparing for him a ſtill more glorious triumph. While the ſpirit of diſcord was diffuſed among the members of the church; while the example of reſiſtance was common, and the example of obedience rare; Fenelon aſcended the pulpit, announced his own condemnation and ſubmiſſion, exhorted all perſons of his dioceſe, as well as all chriſtians, to ſubmit as he ſubmitted; he checked the zeal of thoſe who wiſhed to defend him and to attack the deciſion of the ſee of Rome; and added, that a ſhepherd ought to be as ſubmiſſive as the leaſt of his flock.

Fenelon paſſed the laſt ſixteen years of his life at his dioceſe, fulfilling every

duty of his high ſtation in the moſt exemplary manner. He not only performed the uſual functions of his epiſcopal office, but exerciſed even the duties of an ordinary prieſt, confeſſing and regulating the conſciences of ſeveral of the laity, who placed themſelves under his direction. Many of the letters which he wrote on thoſe occaſions, were publiſhed after his death, and prove a perfect knowledge of the windings and turnings of the human heart, a pure and unaffected piety, and a great mildneſs towards the defects of others.

Convinced, from his own experience in the education of the duke of Burgundy, of the imperious force of education, he removed from Valenciennes to Cambray, the ſeminary for the inſtruction of perſons in his dioceſe deſigned for holy orders. He frequently aſſiſted at the

the examinations, and himſelf queſtioned each candidate before he ordained him: he explained to the ſtudents every week the principles of religion; exhorted them to lay before him any difficulties or objections which occurred to them; liſtened to them with patience, and anſwered them with candour and mildneſs. Ramſay, his diſciple and biographer, who was frequently preſent at theſe conferences, does not know which to admire moſt, his extreme condeſcenſion, or the ſublimity of his diſcourſes.

He preached frequently, during his viſitations, and always adapted his diſcourſes to the capacity of his hearers. That voice which had charmed the court of Louis the fourteenth; that genius which had enlightened Europe, addreſſed himſelf to peaſants and mechanics; and no ſtyle was foreign to

him

him in his endeavours to inſtruct and improve mankind.

Ramſay has related various anecdotes of this amiable prelate during his reſidence at Cambray, which prove the benevolence and excellency of his character. A clergyman of his dioceſe boaſted in his preſence, that he had aboliſhed the dances of peaſants on feſtivals and holidays; "My good friend," returned Fenelon, "let us not dance "ourſelves, but let us permit thoſe "poor creatures to dance: for why "ſhould we deprive them of the mo-"mentary ſatisfaction of forgetting their "wretchedneſs?" He frequently in his walks viſited the peaſants, and not only comforted and aſſiſted them in their weakneſſes, but converſed with them in the moſt familiar manner, and partook of their ſcanty fare. After his death many of them preſerved the chairs

chairs in which he had ſat as relics; and would point them out to their family with a melancholy pleaſure, "Be- "hold the wooden chairs in which our "good archbiſhop was wont to ſit in "the midſt of our families; alas, he "now no longer exiſts but in our me- "mory." Having loſt his library by fire, "I had much rather," he ſaid, "that my books ſhould be deſtroyed, "than the cabin of a poor family." In one of his rambles he obſerved a peaſant in great diſtreſs; and demanding the cauſe, "Alas," returned the peaſant, "I am juſt driven from my "cottage by the enemy; and had not "time to ſave a cow which ſupported "my family with her milk; the enemy "has carried her away, and I ſhall "never find another." Fenelon inſtantly departed in company with a ſingle domeſtick, and under favour of his

his paſſport, found the cow after much trouble, and brought it back to the peaſant.

His charity was confined only by the wants of the neceſſitous. That part of his revenue which was not appropriated to the expence of his own houſehold, he gave to hoſpitals and nunneries, for the education of perſons deſtined for the church; and relieved in ſecret, perſons of condition, who, reduced from affluence to extreme poverty, could not ſubmit to demand contributions.

But a greater and more public theatre preſented itſelf to the ſenſibility of Fenelon. The army in Flanders, the only defence of the kingdom, was unprovided with ſufficient magazines, and became incapable of acting. Fenelon opened his granaries, and ſet the example of diſintereſted liberality, which was followed

lowed by the neighbouring diſtricts; the troops were ſupplied; and Flanders ſaved. After the battle of Malplaquet he filled his palace and the ſeminary with the ſick and wounded officers, ſupplied them with all kinds of neceſſaries, and even hired apartments for thoſe whom he could not receive. Nor was his palace only open to perſons of diſtinction; it was no leſs the aſylum of the poor inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, who were driven from their habitations at the approach of the enemy, and took refuge in Cambray. The benevolent prelate preſided at the conſultations of the phyſicians; and attended and comforted the ſick. Who can hear without a mixture of affection and reſpect for his memory, ſuch traits of a prelate, venerable from age, rank, and underſtanding, diſtributing like a beneficent

angel,

angel, among the unfortunate ſufferers, ſuccours, and conſolations; and giving the moſt touching examples of thoſe virtues, which he had already inculcated in the moſt affecting leſſons!

Nor was the veneration for this excellent prelate confined to the French armies. Eugene and Marlborough paid a homage to his exalted character, by ſending detachments of troops to guard his eſtates from pillage, and by ordering grain for his uſe to be eſcorted to the gates of Cambray. The officers alſo of the allied armies repeatedly aſſured him, that he might travel throughout his dioceſe, without incurring the ſmalleſt danger; and ſhould be provided with an eſcort, whenever he judged it neceſſary.

If he obtained, merely by the fame of his virtues, ſuch an aſcendancy over thoſe to whom he was unknown, how

greatly muſt he have been adored by thoſe who approached his perſon! we can eaſily credit, from the peruſal of his works and letters, all the homage which his contemporaries paid to the charms of his ſociety, the faſcination of his manners, and the excellence of his character. A temper always mild and ſerene; a polite yet ſimple addreſs; an animated converſation; a mild cheerfulneſs tempering the dignity of his ſtation; a religious zeal highly tinctured with enthuſiaſm, yet unaccompanied with the bitterneſs of fanaticiſm; a wonderful perſpicuity of expreſſion in explaining the moſt abſtruſe and difficult ſubjects: theſe were the qualities which rendered him the object of regard and admiration. He poſſeſſed the talent of reducing himſelf to a level with perſons of all capacities, and never to appear anxious

to

to diſplay the ſuperiority of his own underſtanding: his great talents and profound learning, inſtead of filling him with pride and ſuperciliouſneſs, rendered him more humble and unaſſuming in his compoſitions. He paid extreme deference to the opinion of thoſe whom he conſulted, and effaced or corrected ſentiments or paſſages, without the ſmalleſt contradiction, or attachment to his own ideas. "I have often," adds his biographer, "more admired his docility in adopting corrections, than his fertility in "compoſing."

The enemies of Fenelon, who perſecuted him even in his retirement, have aſſerted that his humility under his diſgrace was feigned, and only a cover to his ambition; and that he regretted the court as if it were poſſible for a man not to regret a place where he had many

many friends; in which he had formed the duke of Burgundy, on whom he doated, as the work of his own hands; as if it were poſſible to love diſgrace, and quit the certain proſpect of power and conſequence,

"Nor caſt
One longing lingering look behind."

While Fenelon was thus employing his great talents in the duties of his ſtation, and in alleviating the miſeries of mankind, the time was approaching, when he was likely to ſee his royal pupil practiſe thoſe great maxims of government which he had inculcated. The dauphin dying in 1711 the duke of Burgundy became the heir apparent; the advanced age, and increaſing infirmities, of Louis the fourteenth rendered the proſpect of his acceſſion to the throne no diſtant event; the new

monarch would undoubtedly have raiſed his preceptor to the higheſt place in the adminiſtration of affairs; and that virtuous prelate, who had enlightened the world by his precepts, would have ſerved his country by carrying thoſe precepts into execution. The duke of Burgundy had always conſidered his venerable preceptor in the light of a father and a friend. In the heighth of his diſgrace, when it was dangerous even to mention his name at court, his amiable pupil thus wrote to him:

"At laſt, my dear archbiſhop, I "find an opportunity of breaking the "ſilence which I have been conſtrained "to keep during four years. I have "ſince ſuffered many evils; but one of "the greateſt has been, my not being "able to prove to you what I felt on "your

" your account during this interval;
" and how greatly my friendſhip has
" increaſed inſtead of being leſſened
" by your misfortunes. I look forward
" with delight to the time when I ſhall
" be able to ſee you; but I fear that
" this time is ſtill very diſtant. I was
" greatly ſhocked at the treatment
" which you have met with, but we
" muſt ſubmit to the Divine will, and
" believe that whatever happens is for
" the beſt.—Verſailles, Dec. 22, 1710."

When he paſſed through Cambray in his way to the army in Flanders, which he was deſtined to command, he ſaid to Fenelon, " I know how much I am
" indebted to you, and you know what
" I am." And when a new edition of Telemachus was preſented to him, he exclaimed, " My whole glory ſhall con-

" ſiſt in reigning over my people, ac-
" cording to the precepts of Mentor."

But all theſe fond hopes were annihilated by the premature death of his amiable pupil in 1712. Though he bore this afflicting ſtroke with the moſt perfect reſignation, yet the loſs of the object, whom he loved with more than paternal affection, and under whoſe future auſpices he fondly expected to ſee his country recovering from a long ſeries of calamities, deeply afflicted him. It was then that borne down with the weight of ſorrow, he exclaimed, " All
" my ties are broken!"

He ſurvived this irreparable loſs three years, lingering, as it was truly ſaid of him, rather than living on earth. In the commencement of 1715 he was attacked with an inflammation of the lungs, which brought on a violent fever,

and

and was accompanied with the moſt excruciating pains. He bore his ſickneſs with chriſtian reſignation, equally removed from timid ſuperſtition or philoſophic indifference, and died with the compoſed tranquillity of a good man, who ſees in death the inſtant in which virtue is going to approach the throne of grace. Almoſt his laſt words were expreſſions of reſpect for the king, who had diſgraced him; and for the church, which had condemned him; and in the agonies of death, he offered up his laſt addreſs to his Maker, "Thy "will and not mine be done." He was at the ſame time ſo generous, ſo diſintereſted, and ſo œconomical, that he died without debts as without wealth, and left only ſufficient to defray the expenſes of his funeral. The relations of Fenelon placed on his monument a te-

dious and cold inſcription, which affected to enumerate all his dignities, all his virtues, and all his talents. D'Alembert propoſed to replace it with the following epitaph:

* *Sous cette pierre repoſe Fenelon.— Paſſant, n'efface point par tes pleurs cette epitaphe, afin que d'autres la liſent et pleurent comme toi.*

* Under this ſtone repoſes Fenelon.— Paſſenger, do not efface with thy tears this inſcription, that others may read and weep like thee.

CONVERSATION 3.

Anger.

EUBULUS is near ſixty, has all the vivacity of youth with the experience of old age; he has withdrawn ſome time from the buſtle and riot of the buſy world, but has retired in good-humour. All is calmneſs and ſerenity within his own breaſt; and as he is neither phlegmatic nor cenſorious, he enjoys the company and converſation of a few choſen friends, and views the ſtorms and ſhipwrecks of life from a ſafe and quiet harbour. Our ſociety has gained a great acquiſition in his company, which he granted to our deſire with all the good-humour and readineſs imaginable. He has ſtrong natural good ſenſe, and an extenſive me-

mory, is very well read in modern hiſtory, and has been converſant with ſome of the firſt characters of the preſent times; he has collected a number of entertaining and curious anecdotes, which he relates in a pleaſing and unaffected manner. As a compliment to his age and character we have elected him perpetual preſident; he has received this deference with pleaſure, and accepted it without reſerve.

He has indeed already made one regulation of which we feel the good effects. At the laſt Converſation two gentlemen arrived ſome time before the reſt of the company, and converſing upon politics, they differed in their opinion, and became exceedingly angry with each other. During the height of their conteſt, the reſt of the company entered, when they ſtill carried on the diſcourſe with the ſame violence; till

Eubulus

Eubulus interfered in the following manner: "The intention of this meeting is to produce good-will and benevolence; let us not, therefore, loſe the advantage we may derive from the amiable and ſenſible members who are preſent, by your difference of opinion; yield to the general wiſh of this aſſembly; change the diſcourſe, and for the future let it be a rule, that no party politics ſhall be admitted as a ſubject of diſcourſe: by party politics, I mean the diſputes which are kindled by intereſt and ambition. Converſe upon government in general, ſearch into the Engliſh conſtitution, conſider its origin, its power, its effect, but lay aſide theſe feuds which kindle animoſities: I have known many friendſhips diſſolved by diſputes upon political opinions."

The gentlemen felt the force of this rebuke

rebuke from Eubulus, made excuſes for their improper vehemence of temper; and to convince the ſociety that they were ſenſible of their error, they deſired that *anger* might be the ſubject of the next evening's diſcuſſion, which was accordingly commenced this day by Eubulus.

ANGER is a violent emotion of the mind, ariſing from an injury either real or imaginary, which openly vents itſelf againſt the offending party. The effects of anger are often productive of the moſt dreadful conſequences. The paſſionate man, when the fit is upon him, becomes as incapable of diſtinguiſhing right from wrong, as an idiot or a mad man; he is carried away by the impulſe of the moment; a turn of imagination, often as violent as a guſt of wind, determines his conduct, and hurries him to the perpetration of actions,

which,

which, in his calmer moments ſtrike him with remorſe.

So nicely and wonderfully are we made, that all the internal feelings have a ſtrong influence upon the body. The truth of this obſervation is, in no caſe, ſo evident, as in that of an angry man. His countenance wears the ſtrongeſt and moſt viſible marks of it's uncontroulable power; all the nerves are put into the moſt violent agitation, and the frame is continually ſhattered by it's repeated attacks. Anger, as it proceeds originally from the mind, ruffles that as well as the body: the calm and quiet affections which diffuſe peace and joy around them, fly at it's approach, and are ſucceeded by a black train of evil paſſions, which carry their own puniſhment, by inflicting the moſt bitter torments. Nor do the ill effects ſubſide when anger ceaſes; the mind ſtill

retains

retains it's commotion, like the ſea, which continues in a ſtate of agitation, though the winds have abated.

It has generally been argued, that anger is not ſo much the conſequence of habit, as the production of a peculiar frame of body and mind; that it is engrafted in the conſtitution of ſome men, and is part of their very nature; that it is therefore as vain and fruitleſs an undertaking to ſtem a torrent which bears down all before it, as to obliterate a paſſion which overpowers all reflection. But this is a ſubtle argument, which might equally be uſed in defence of every kind of vice. It is in every man's power to controul his paſſions, and anger, amongſt the reſt, is ſubject to be over-ruled; not perhaps from a few ſlight and indolent ſtruggles, but by the whole power of his reſolution; by keeping a conſtant watch over his

words

words and actions, and by avoiding every means likely to raiſe or excite his reſentment.

It was a memorable ſaying of Peter the Great, "I have civilized my coun-"try, but I cannot civilize myſelf." He was at times vehement and impetuous, and committed, under the impulſe of his fury, the moſt unwarrantable exceſſes; yet we learn, that even he was known to tame his anger, and to riſe ſuperior to the violence of his paſſions. Being one evening in a ſelect company, when ſomething was ſaid which gave him great offence, his rage ſuddenly kindled, and roſe to it's utmoſt pitch: though he could not command his firſt emotions, he had reſolution enough to leave the company. He walked bare-headed for ſome time, under the moſt violent agitation, in an intenſe froſty air, ſtamping on the ground,

ground, and beating his head with all the marks of the greateſt fury and paſſion; and did not return to the company until he was quite compoſed.

Lord Somers was naturally of a choleric diſpoſition; and the moſt ſtriking part of his character, was the power of controuling his paſſion at the moment when it ſeemed ready to burſt forth. Swift, in his "Four laſt Years of Queen Anne," has in vain endeavoured to blacken this amiable part of that great man's character; as what the dean miſtook for a ſevere cenſure, has proved the greateſt panegyric. "Lord Somers being ſenſible how "ſubject he is to violent paſſions, avoids "all incitements to them by teaching "thoſe, whom he converſes with, from "his own example, to keep within "the bounds of decency; and it is "indeed true, that no man is more apt

"to

"to take fire upon the leaſt appearance
"of provocation; which temper he
"ſtrives to ſubdue, with the utmoſt
"violence upon himſelf; ſo that his
"breaſt has been ſeen to heave, and
"his eyes to ſparkle with rage in
"thoſe very moments when his words
"and the cadence of his voice were in
"the humbleſt and ſofteſt manner."

An Arabian merchant having hired a waterman's boat, refuſed to pay the freightage. The waterman, in a violent paſſion, appealed ſeveral times to the government of Maſhat for juſtice; the governor as often ordered him to come again: but obſerving him one day preſent his petition with coolneſs, he immediately granted his ſuit. The waterman, ſurpriſed at this conduct, demanded the reaſon why he did not ſooner grant his petition.

"Becauſe,

"Becauſe," ſaid the judge, "you were "always drunk when I ſaw you." But the waterman declaring he had not been overtaken with wine for ſeveral years, the judge replied, "The drun-"kenneſs with which you were over-"taken is the moſt dangerous of all, "it is the *drunkenneſs of anger*."

Conversation 4.

Oracle of Delphos.

We were indebted to the Preſident for the following entertainment of the evening.

Religion from the earlieſt ages has been neceſſary for man; though we are endowed with reaſoning faculties, we are ſtill ſo weak and imperfect, that we naturally look up to a ſuperior Being for our aid and ſupport. In every nation there was and is ſome kind of worſhip; and in the moſt uninſtructed minds we ſometimes meet with ſublime notions of divinity. A boy being aſked where God is, anſwered, "Can you tell me where he "is not?" A farmer being aſked what

ſize God Almighty was of, anſwered, "He is ſo large that the whole hea-"vens cannot contain him; and he is "ſo ſmall, as to dwell, I hope, in my "heart." Yet, notwithſtanding the natural diſpoſition of the human mind to rely upon a ſupreme Being; without the aſſiſtance of revelation, we ſhould be in a very wretched ſituation. Pagan hiſtory is full of impoſitions, that were daily practiſed upon the credulous part of mankind, and induced them to believe in many deteſtable objects of worſhip, and to have faith in apparent miracles, which were nothing but the groſſeſt deceptions.

The famous Oracle of Delphos, reſorted to by the Greeks, who were the moſt enlightened people upon earth, will fully exemplify the truth of this aſſertion; it is thus deſcribed in the travels of Anacharſis the younger:

The

The ſun was juſt riſen as my friend Philotas and myſelf approached the city of Delphos, which appeared riſing in the form of an amphitheatre, beneath the two ſummits that terminate the ſouthern extremity of the celebrated mountain of Parnaſſus. The gilded ſtatues, which ornamented the roofs of the temples in ſuch abundance, glittering in the ſun, formed a moſt ſplendid appearance; and among the numerous buildings of this magnificent city, the famous temple of Apollo, the tutelary deity, was moſt diſtinguiſhed. At the ſame time we ſaw, advancing ſlowly on the plains and hills, proceſſions of children, that ſeemed to diſpute the pre-eminence for grace and beauty. From the top of the mountain, and on the banks of the ſea, an immenſe multitude haſtened towards Delphos. On entering the city our

attention was arreſted by the moſt beautiful works of art. Statues, bronzes, baſſo-relievos, and armour exquiſitely wrought, are the offerings of nations, kings, generals, and private individuals, who truſted in this oracle, and wiſhed to purchaſe it's favour. The temple is chiefly built of Parian marble: two Athenian ſculptors have adorned the pediment with beautiful images of the gods and muſes. The capitals of the pillars are hung with ſuits of gilt armour, and the ſhields offered by the Athenians after the battle of Marathon. The veſtibule is ornamented with paintings of the labours of Hercules, and other hiſtories of the gods. Upon the altar is placed a buſt of Homer, and vaſes of holy water. Upon the wall are written ſeveral moral precepts, ſome of which, it is pretended, were delivered by the wiſe men

of

of Greece. A myſterious word of two letters, inſcribed over the entrance, gives occaſion for various explanations. The meaning is,

THOU ART.

It conveys a confeſſion of our own nothingneſs, and an homage due to the divinity, to whom alone exiſtence belongs. A tablet alſo ſuſpended from the wall, contains theſe words: "Let no perſon with impure "hands approach this temple." In the ſanctuary, from whence this ancient oracle delivers thoſe myſterious anſwers which have ſo frequently decided the fate of empires, is a magnificent ſtatue of gold.

The diſcovery of this ſacred ſpot was entirely owing to accident. Some goats wandering amongſt the rocks of Parnaſſus, having approached a hole in the ground, from whence iſſued ma-

lignant vapours, were inſtantly affected with convulſions. The ſhepherds and inhabitants of the neighbouring places flocked to ſee this prodigy, breathed the ſame vapours, felt the ſame effects, and pronounced in their delirium ſome unmeaning words. Theſe words were immediately conſidered as predictions, and the vapour of the cave, as the breath of a divinity, which unveiled futurity.

Several miniſters are employed in the temple; the firſt who preſents himſelf to the eyes of a ſtranger, is a young man brought up within the precincts of the temple, who is always obliged to obſerve the moſt exact continence. As ſoon as day appears, he goes to a ſmall wood, followed by his aſſiſtants, to gather branches of the ſacred laurel, with which he ornaments the doors, the walls, the altar, and the tripod,

upon

upon which the prieſteſs pronounces her oracles. This young man alſo draws water from the Caſtalian fountain, with which he fills the vaſes in the veſtibule, and ſprinkles the interior parts of the temple. With his bow and arrows he then drives away the birds that attempt to ſettle upon the roof of the edifice, or upon the ſtatues which are in the ſacred encloſure.

The prophets, and ſaints, exerciſe a more exalted miniſtry; they aſſemble near the prieſteſs when ſhe is upon the tripod, collect her anſwers, arrange them, and ſometimes turn them into verſe. Elderly women are appointed to watch the ſacred fire, to ſupply it with fuel, and prevent it from ever being extinguiſhed: a number of ſacrificers, augurs, ſoothſayers, and inferior prieſts, add to the ſolemnity of the religious rites, and are ſcarcely ſufficient to attend the

innumerable concourſe of ſtrangers, who repair to Delphos from all parts of the world.

While we were informing ourſelves of theſe particulars, we obſerved at the foot of the mountain, and in the road which is called the ſacred way, a great number of cars, filled with men, women, and children; who having alighted, formed their ranks, and advanced near the temple, ſinging hymns; they came from Peloponneſus, to offer to the God the homages of the inhabitants. The Athenian proceſſion next advanced, and was followed by deputations from ſeveral cities, amongſt which were diſtinguiſhed thoſe from the iſle of Chos, compoſed of a hundred youths.

New and intereſting ſcenes opened every moment to our view. How ſhall I deſcribe them? how ſhall I repreſent thoſe auguſt ceremonies, and various groupes

groupes of figures, like ſo many moving pictures, paſſing in rapid ſucceſſion, each contraſting and giving new charms to the other? while we heard the ſurrounding rocks echo alternately with the ſounds of tumultuous joy and the notes of pathetic hymns, which were addreſſed to the Deity with every expreſſion of religious extacy.

The following day we waited in the ſacred encloſure, till we were permitted to enter the ſanctuary. We ſaw the prieſteſs traverſe the temple, attended by prieſts, poets, and ſaints. She was attired in a looſe flowing white robe, her hair was diſhevelled, and her forehead was bound with a wreath of laurel; ſhe chewed the leaves of that ſacred tree, and threw ſeveral, mixed with barley meal, into the holy fire; ſhe appeared melancholy and dejected, and ſeemed like a victim dragged to the altar.

tar. The temple was ſurrounded with bulls, goats, and other animals deſtined for the ſacrifices; and their agonizing ſhrieks, mingled with the ſound of the hymns, added horror to the ſolemnity of the ſcene. An eager impatience of knowing future events was painted in every countenance: hope and fear were alike predominant. We ſacrificed a bull and a goat: the ſucceſs of the omens having juſtified the purity of our intentions, we entered the temple, our heads covered with laurel; and we held ſome branches bound together with white wool, with which ſymbol the ſuppliants approach the altar.

A prieſt conducted us through a ſmall chapel into the ſanctuary, a deep and gloomy cavern, which was filled with a delightful odour of frankincenſe, and other perfumes, attributed by the prieſts to a ſupernatural cauſe. Near the centre

centre is the aperture from which iſſues the vapour, or prophetic exhalation. A tripod, ornamented with crowns and branches of laurel, conceals the aperture; it has a brazen cover of a circular form, and full of holes through which the prieſteſs exhales the vapour. Exhauſted with the numerous oracles which ſhe had already delivered, ſhe refuſed to place herſelf on the tripod, and anſwer our queſtions: compelled at length by the ſurrounding miniſters, ſhe drank ſome water from a ſtream which runs in the ſanctuary, and which is ſaid to unveil futurity, and threw herſelf upon the tripod. Inſtantly her limbs were agitated with the moſt violent convulſions, her eyes ſparkled, her mouth foamed, her hair ſtood on end, and after ſtruggling to eſcape from the prieſts who forcibly held her upon the tripod, ſhe burſt into a tranſport of frenzy, tore

the

the wreath of laurel from her forehead, and with horrid ſhrieks, uttered ſome incoherent expreſſions, which the prieſts collected as the effects of divine inſpiration, arranged, wrote, and conveyed to us as the anſwer of the God. I had demanded, if I ſhould unfortunately ſurvive my friend Philotas, and he (without conſulting me) had aſked the ſame queſtion. The anſwer was obſcure, and equivocal: we tore it in pieces on quitting the temple, and filled with indignation and pity, bitterly reproached ourſelves for having thus contributed to the agonies of the prieſteſs.

There was formerly but one prieſteſs at Delphos. Since the oracle has been more frequented, three have been appointed, who regularly ſucceed each other in their ſacred functions. They are choſen from the inhabitants of the city, and generally from thoſe of the meaneſt

meaneſt condition: they are ſingle women, without education, without experience; of the pureſt morals, and of inferior capacities; and who have paſſed the fiftieth year of their age. They are required to dreſs ſimply, to uſe no perfume, and to paſs their lives in the practice of religious exerciſes.

Although theſe odious rites have already proved fatal to ſome of the holy ſiſterhood, yet the attendant miniſters feel no compaſſion for their ſufferings, but even add to their torments; from a conviction, that the frantic geſtures of the prieſteſs on the tripod renders the oracle more frequented, and the liberality of thoſe who conſult it more abundant. Gold alone obtains the anſwers of the God.

Conversation 5.

The Old Man and his Dog Trim.

A Member of the ſociety read the following tale, of the Old Man and his Dog Trim; it was founded, he ſaid, on a true incident, which happened a few years ago; and he added, that Marmontel in ſome tales recently publiſhed, under the title of *Les Veillées*, has given a ſimilar ſtory, but has omitted ſome circumſtances which are related in this little tale.

Being upon a viſit to a friend near York, as I was one day walking on the bridge in company with ſome ladies, a grey-haired old man came towards us: he ſupported himſelf with a ſtick, appeared ſo lame, that he could ſcarcely walk, and was followed by a litle tarrier.

tarrier. On approaching us, he ſaid; "Good ladies, will you buy my dog?" the ladies anſwering, that they did not want a dog; he came up to me, and ſaid in a more preſſing manner, and with a more ſupplicating tone of voice; "Sir, I beſeech you buy my dog!" On my anſwering likewiſe that I did not want one, the old man remained a few minutes leaning on his ſtick; and looking at me with an air of diſappointment, ſeemed to reproach me for declining his requeſt, and then uttering a deep ſigh continued his journey.

As he walked on ſlowly, before he was out of ſight, Louiſa, one of the young ladies, whiſpered me, "For God's ſake, "ſir, go after him and buy his dog, for "the poor man ſeems in diſtreſs." I accordingly called the old man back, and aſked him what was the price of the dog? "What you pleaſe," he returned.

"Here is a crown," I replied, "if that "will ſatisfy you, take it, and leave me "your dog." — "The dog is yours," ſaid the old man, "and God bleſs you "with it." — "But," ſaid I, "he will "never follow me, how ſhall I prevent "his eſcape?" "True," replied the old man, "he muſt be tied, or he will fol- "low me." He then untied his gar- ter, called "*Trim*," took him up in his arms, and placed him upon the parapet of the bridge: while he was faſtening the garter round his neck, I perceived the hands of the old man trembling, which I imputed to his age; for his countenance did not change. Having faſtened the knot, he inclined his head towards the dog, and fixing his mouth upon his body, remained for a few mi- nutes in that poſture, motionleſs and without uttering a ſingle word. I ap- proached him, and ſaid, "Friend, what

"is

" is the matter ?"—" Nothing," he an-
" ſwered, but what will ſoon be forgot-
" ten;" and I obſerved his face wet with
" tears. You ſeem," ſaid I, " to regret
" parting with your dog." " Alas it is
" ſo; he is the only friend I have in the
" world; we have never been ſeparated
" from each other. He was my guard
" on the road when I was aſleep; and
" whenever he ſaw me fatigued and
" ſuffering, the poor creature licked
" my face, and ſeemed to eaſe my pain
" with his careſſes; he loves me ſo
" much, that it is but natural I ſhould
" love him in return. But all this is
" nothing to you, he is now yours:"—
and he offered me the garter which he
had juſt faſtened round his neck. " You
" muſt have a very bad opinion of me,"
ſaid I, " if you think that I am capable
" of depriving you of a faithful friend,
" and the only friend which you have

" in the world." He ſeemed affected, and offered to return the crown; but I told him to keep the money and the dog too. Before I could prevent him, the old man threw himſelf upon his knees, and exclaimed, "Good ſir, I owe " you my life; hunger had reduced me " to the moſt extreme neceſſity."

Theſe expreſſions urged my curioſity; and leading him from one queſtion to another, I collected the following account: " Thank heaven," he ſaid, "I " have lived fifty years by the labours " of my hands, and yeſterday, for the " firſt time in my life, I aſked charity. " I am by trade a carpenter, and was " ſettled at Catteric, till on chopping " a piece of wood, I cut my leg with " an axe, and have been ſince in- " capable of working. I am now " going to Sheffield, where I have a " ſon, who is employed in the ma-

" nufactures,

" nufactures, and who will not let me
" want for any thing. But as the jour-
" ney is long, and I can ſcarcely drag
" myſelf along on account of my wound,
" I have ſpent the little money which
" I had been able to ſave, and am
" obliged to beg for ſuſtenance;
" though, as I do not look poor, I got
" but little; and being exhauſted with
" hunger, I had nothing but my poor
" dog."

Here his voice failed him; and his ſobs prevented him from continuing. — " At your age," I replied, " and in this " hot weather, and with a bad leg, I " cannot ſuffer you to continue ſo long " a journey on foot; you will inflame " your wound, and render it incurable. " Follow me; Providence here offers " you an aſylum, where you will find " reſt, aſſiſtance, and perhaps a cure." The old man ſaid nothing, but unty-

ing his dog, followed me to the infirmary. Fortunately the ſurgeon happened to be in the houſe, and on mentioning the poor man's ſituation, he immediately looked at the wound, which was highly inflamed with the heat of the weather, and the fatigue of the journey. "It is fortunate," ſaid the ſurgeon, "that he did not "continue his journey; a few hours "later and he muſt have loſt his leg, "but I can now cure it." — "He "will then get well?" ſaid I — "Yes," replied the ſurgeon; "I will anſwer for "the cure, provided he will continue "perfectly quiet."

As he was going up ſtairs, followed by his faithful tarrier, the porter laid hold of *Trim*, and was preparing to carry him out of the houſe. — "*Trim*," ſaid the old man, "may not poor *Trim* follow me?" — "It is againſt the rules of the houſe," returned

returned the matron, "to admit any "dogs into the wards." — "Alas," replied the old man, "*Trim* will not be happy if he is not with me, and I ſhall "not be happy if he is unhappy." "It "is a pity to part good friends," exclaimed the ſurgeon; "I am convinced "that my patient will ſoon get well, "if *Trim* and he are not parted." Then, turning to the matron, "For "once," he ſaid, "let us break through "the rules of the houſe. If *Trim* behaves well, let him ſtay by his maſter's "bed." — "I will anſwer," returned the old man, "for *Trim*'s behaviour; "he will lay by me whole hours without ſtirring from his ſituation, and if "he may be ſuffered to follow me, I am "ſure he will be as quiet as a mouſe."

Theſe words intereſted every one in favour of *Trim*; the porter inſtantly ſet him down, *Trim* bounded up ſtairs

with great agility, and as if aware of what had paſſed, fawned upon the ſurgeon, and then quietly followed his maſter.

Having thus left the old man and his dog in ſuch good hands, I returned to the company, and related all that had paſſed: all pitied the poor man, and rejoiced at his hopes of recovery; but Louiſa firſt put half a guinea into my hands; the remainder of the company followed her example, ſome gave more and ſome leſs; and I undertook to be the old man's treaſurer.

Mean while the ſtory circulated, and every one wiſhed to hear the tale of the *Old Man and his Dog Trim.* In repeating it I particularly dwelt upon the crown which I offered for the dog, and ſeveral ironically admired the exceſs of my generoſity. Louiſa would ſay, "Only "a crown for ſo ineſtimable a dog!" and

and her opinion was ſure to be adopted by the generality of the company. "And you, ſir," I would ſay, "and you "madam, how much would you have "given?" Each perſon mentioned the ſum which they would have contributed, augmenting or diminiſhing it according to the ſenſibility of their hearts; or the impreſſion which the recital had made upon them. "Well," I replied, "the old man is not far from "hence, and you may now contribute "what you would have given in my "place."

By theſe means their charity was excited by emulation; a comfortable ſum was obtained; the old man recovered, and I conducted him to the manſion-houſe almoſt as lively and as friſky as his dog. Both were received with general ſatisfaction, but *Trim* was the moſt taken notice of: in his life he

never received ſo many careſſes, and from none more than from the charming Louiſa. *Trim* was at firſt confounded, but he ſoon appeared as if he knew why he was ſo much careſſed. The old man dined and ſupped in the ſervants' hall, with *Trim* by his ſide.

The next morning he came to take leave of me: I put into his hands the collection that had been made for him; and in vain I aſſured him that I had contributed nothing. "I can never forget," exclaimed he, "that I owe you every "thing:" in ſaying theſe words he endeavoured to throw himſelf at my feet; in ſtruggling to prevent him he threw himſelf into my arms, and we embraced and bid adieu to each other, as if we had been old friends. "Sir," ſaid he, "you have loaded me with "favours, but I ſhall aſk of you an- "other favour; you have embraced

"me,

" me, will you condeſcend to kiſs *Trim?*
" I ſhall be happy to acquaint my ſon
" that you have kiſſed my dog. Come,
" *Trim*, come, the gentleman will do
" you the honour to careſs you." *Trim* roſe upon his hind legs, and pawed me with his fore feet, as I ſtooped down to pat him; and as I inclined my head, the figure of the old man inclining his head on the dog as I was then doing, and thinking that he was embracing him for the laſt time, preſented itſelf ſo forcibly to my imagination, that the tears ſtarted from my eyes. " Ah!" exclaimed the old man, " ah! you love *Trim*, I
" ſee; keep him, he is ſtill yours."
" No, my good friend," I replied, " go,
" and the bleſſing of God attend you.
" I now feel myſelf happier than I de-
" ſerve, and be aſſured that the image
" of you and your dog will never be
" effaced from my recollection."

At

At this moment Louiſa entered the room with a plate of meat for the dog. She ſet it down before him, and while *Trim* was feeding, ſhe tied round his neck a roſe-coloured ribband. I ſaid to the old man, "There is the perſon to "whom your thanks are due; without "her I ſhould never have bought your "dog; without her you would never "have been cured; and without her "your little favourite *Trim* would not "have been decorated with this roſe-"coloured collar." The old man inſtantly taking up his dog, placed it in Louiſa's arms. — "*Trim*, here is your "miſtreſs: this, madam, is the only re-"compence in my power to make for "your kind favours;" and ſeeing the dog ſtruggling to get looſe, he added, "*Trim* is not fond of ſtrangers, but "ſoon becomes attached to thoſe whom "he knows, and who are kind to him.

"He

"He is not handſome, but he is a "good creature. I am happy in pro- "curing for him a kind and affectio- "nate miſtreſs." So ſaying he drew his hand acroſs his eyes, and quitted the door. Louiſa holding the dog in her arms continued ſtroaking and careſſing it; but when the creature, inſtead of returning her careſſes, ſtruggled to get looſe, ſhe opened the houſe-door, and putting the dog upon the ground, *Trim* immediately ran after his maſter, and ſoon overtook him. The old man ſtooped, took him up in his arms, and preſſed him to his boſom; then taking off his hat, and waving it as a token of ſatisfaction and gratitude, haſtened his pace, and in a few minutes both he and *Trim* were out of ſight.

CONVERSATION 6.

Inſtances of Benevolence.

THE following inſtances of benevolence were related by different members of the community.

"A GENTLEMAN, being at Marſeilles, hired a boat, with an intention of ſailing for pleaſure; he entered into converſation with the two young men who owned the veſſel, and learned, that they were not watermen by trade, but ſilverſmiths; and that when they could be ſpared from their uſual buſineſs, they employed themſelves in that way to increaſe their earnings. On expreſſing his ſurpriſe at their conduct, and imputing it to an avaricious diſpoſition; "Oh! ſir," ſaid the young men, "if "you knew our reaſons, you would "aſcribe it to a better motive. Our "father,

" father, anxious to aſſiſt his family,
" ſcraped together all he was worth;
" purchaſed a veſſel for the purpoſe of
" trading to the coaſt of Barbary, but
" was unfortunately taken by a pirate,
" carried to Tripoli, and ſold for a
" ſlave. He writes word, that he is
" luckily fallen into the hands of a
" maſter who treats him with great hu-
" manity; but that the ſum which is
" demanded for his ranſom is ſo exor-
" bitant, that it will be impoſſible for
" him ever to raiſe it; he adds, that we
" muſt therefore relinquiſh all hope of
" ever ſeeing him, and be contented,
" that he has as many comforts as his
" ſituation will admit. With the hopes
" of reſtoring to his family a beloved
" father, we are ſtriving, by every ho-
" neſt means in our power, to collect
" the ſum neceſſary for his ranſom, and
" we are not aſhamed to employ our-
" ſelves

"ſelves in the occupation of water-"men." The gentleman was ſtruck with this account, and on his departure, made them a handſome preſent.

"Some months afterwards the young men being at work in their ſhop were greatly ſurpriſed at the ſudden arrival of their father, who threw himſelf into their arms; exclaiming, at the ſame time, that he was fearful they had taken ſome unjuſt method to raiſe the money for his ranſom, for it was too great a ſum for them to have gained by their ordinary occupation. They profeſſed their ignorance of the whole affair, and could only ſuſpect they owed their father's releaſe to that ſtranger, to whoſe generoſity they had been before ſo much obliged.

"After Monteſquieu's death, an account of this affair was found among his papers, and the ſum actually remit-

ted to Tripoli for the old man's ranſom. It is a pleaſure to hear of ſuch an act of benevolence performed even by a perſon totally unknown to us; but the pleaſure is infinitely increaſed, when it proves the union of virtue and talents in an author ſo renowned as Monteſquieu."

"The wife of a poor labourer at Vienna being delivered of her ſixth child, the huſband, unable to provide for ſo large a family, carried it reluctantly to the Foundling Hoſpital, depoſited it in the baſket which was placed near the gate for the reception of the foundlings, and anxiouſly waited till the arrival of the inſpector, that he might take a farewel view of his child. When the inſpector came at the uſual time to examine the baſket, he perceived two children therein; obſerving the labourer, who ſtood at a ſmall diſtance, he ſuppoſed

poſed that he had brought them both, and compelled the poor man, notwithſtanding all his proteſtations to the contrary, to return with two children inſtead of one, which was already more than he knew how to maintain. His wife as well as himſelf were exceedingly dejected at this increaſe of their expences; but, unwilling to expoſe the little ſtranger in the ſtreet, they determined to uſe all their endeavours to ſupport themſelves and the ſeven children, and they hoped Providence would aſſiſt them. On undreſſing the child the woman found a paper ſewed to its cloaths, containing an order upon a banker for ſeveral crowns a month, to be paid to the perſon that took care of it. The good people were not a little rejoiced at their happy fortune: but the ſtory being circulated, and coming to the knowledge of the managers of the hoſpital,

hoſpital, they claimed the child as their property. The labourer refuſed to relinquiſh it, and was aſſiſted by ſome perſons of diſtinction. The cauſe being tried in a court of juſtice, it was decreed, that as the foundling hoſpital had at firſt declined receiving the child, it of right belonged to the poor man who had ſhewn ſuch humanity in keeping it, when he was ſo ill able to afford any additional expence.

During the late war a petition was preſented to a ſociety, which is held in London by ladies of the firſt rank and fortune in this kingdom, for the purpoſe of relieving diſtreſſed perſons. This petition came from a poor old woman, who from ſome particular bodily infirmity was incapable of aſſiſting herſelf. She ſtated, that her ſon, who

was a ſoldier in one of our Engliſh regiments, always placed her in a lodging as near to his quarters as poſſible; that he conſtantly came to her during his leiſure hours at different parts of the day to dreſs her, make her bed, procure her food, and give her every aſſiſtance in his power. She added, that his regiment was ordered to America, and that when ſhe was deprived of him, ſhe ſhould loſe every comfort and ſupport. The ladies finding that theſe circumſtances were true, took care of the poor old woman, wrote a letter of recommendation to the commanding officer of the regiment in favour of the young man; and he was immediately promoted to the rank of ſerjeant, as a reward for his filial attention to his aged parent.

To the Preſident.

"SIR,

"IT is with pleaſure I learn, that your ſociety is an admirer of nature, and therefore I venture to communicate to you the following ſimple facts, which I obſerved in two perſons of the loweſt claſs; and which ſhew that the mind is not always contracted by narrowneſs of circumſtances, nor the feelings blunted by the difficulties of gaining a ſubſiſtance.

"In a journey which I took this ſummer from Briſtol to Southampton, while the poſtilion was ſtopping to water his horſes, I alighted from the carriage and entered a ſmall cottage, which ſeemed the aſylum of cleanlineſs and content: the woman of the houſe was attended by a numerous offspring, amongſt which one girl, conſiderably

taller than the reſt, was employed in rocking a cradle. On aſking the woman, if this girl was her daughter? "No "madam," ſhe replied, "ſhe is a poor "orphan, who has no friend in the "world but God and me. I received "her into my houſe out of pity for her "helpleſs ſtate, till ſhe is able to ob-"tain a better proviſion, and ſhe repays "me as much as ſhe can, for ſhe has "pretty dutiful ways." I could not avoid reflecting how few rich perſons would have ſhewn the generoſity of this poor woman, who ſcarce claimed any merit from this worthy action."

"Two boats ſet out from Dover in ſtormy weather to aſſiſt a veſſel in diſtreſs: one, containing three ſailors, was overſet; one of the ſailors ſunk immediately to the bottom, the others were ſtruggling

ſtruggling for life. When a rope was thrown to one of them from the men in the other boat, he refuſed it, crying out: "Fling it to Tom, he is now "ready to ſink, and I can laſt ſome "time longer." They did ſo, Tom was drawn into the boat; and then the rope was flung to the generous tar, juſt in time to ſave him from being drowned."

CONVERSATION 7.

Inſtances of Benevolence.

THE various inſtances of humanity which were related on our laſt meeting, occaſioned the following eſſay to be written by a gentleman of our ſociety. It was a topic, he ſaid, that could better bear diſcuſſion than moſt others, and would ſerve to introduce a letter from a friend, whoſe benevolent diſpoſition was called forth by a well-timed application.

THERE is a beautiful ſtory recorded in an ancient Pagan writer, "That the deity who formed the firſt "man out of the ground, reflecting "at the ſame time on the calamities "which the unhappy creature was to "undergo,

"undergo, wept over his work, and "tempered it with tears*." By this accident man was endued with a ſoftneſs of diſpoſition, and the moſt tender feelings: his deſcendants inherited theſe benevolent qualities, that by mutually relieving each other's ſufferings, they might in ſome meaſure alleviate their own; and that ſome amends might be made for the natural wants and imperfections of their nature, by the pleaſure which they receive from ſoothing diſtreſs, and ſoftening diſappointment.

And miſerable indeed would be the lot of mankind, if deſtined, as they are, to be the creatures of ſociety, they withheld the mutual intercourſe of kindneſs and good offices. For thoſe fine and exquiſite feelings of benevolence, which melt the ſoul into a participation of human miſeries, are the

* Quoted in one of Jortin's Sermons.

great ſources from whence our moſt exalted pleaſures are derived. Every act of charity is productive of the moſt pure and heartfelt ſatisfaction, as we enlarge our own proportion of happineſs by the communication of it to others. The greateſt obligation therefore lies on the ſide of the perſon who beſtows the kindneſs, and the very acceptance of a proffered ſervice is to a liberal mind payment ſufficient.

And yet how few are there, who give with a tolerable grace! We frequently deſtroy the merit of our benevolence by our manner of beſtowing. Our generoſity is not uncommonly attended with a haughty and ſupercilious air; our pride is pleaſed; and we evidently make a parade of our ſuperiority by an ungenerous method of contributing our aſſiſtance. Thus it happens, that, while we relieve the

poverty

poverty of the diſtreſſed, we hurt their delicacy; and while we ſupply their neceſſities, we draw from them not the tears of gratitude, but the tears of ſhame and vexation, in being obliged to accept a boon ſo ungraciouſly conferred. In ſhort, we act as if we conſulted our oſtentation, not our benevolence; and as if our very compaſſion was dictated by the moſt illiberal principles. We ought not therefore to be ſurpriſed if ingratitude ſhould be excited by ſuch a behaviour, which wears only the outward appearance of charity, while it neglects its moſt eſſential qualities.

But I turn with pleaſure from the dark ſide of human nature, to the conſideration of this exalted virtue in the faireſt light, to obſerve charity relieving the wretched with the utmoſt delicacy,

ſicacy, or concealing from the view the benevolent hand, which contributes to their alleviation; and here I can with pleaſure produce an inſtance to the honour of the fair ſex, and of human nature.

Some time ago, two young ladies went in a party to Scarborough, where having heard a tender tale of a family in great diſtreſs, they repaired immediately to the miniſter of the pariſh, to whoſe care they left a genteel preſent, with an injunction of ſecreſy; the gift of the eldeſt was twenty guineas, and ſhe added, with a look of unaſſuming dignity, that it was only expending leſs upon her dreſs; and her appearance in public was not to be conſidered in compariſon with the heartfelt ſatisfaction of being a friend to the poor.

Eugenio

Eugenio joins to his other virtues the amiable quality of tempering his kindneſs with affability, and his generoſity with condeſcenſion. He takes off the weight of dependance by the deference he pays to the objects of his bounty: he conſults their delicacy while he ſuccours their indigence, and ſeems to conſider himſelf, not as conferring, but as receiving an obligation. Thus he reconciles the acceptance of a favour with the moſt refined feelings, and at the ſame time prevents repeated expreſſions of gratitude often more irkſome than poverty itſelf. But his liberality of ſentiment will beſt appear from the following letter, written at a time of life when Eugenio had not found thoſe opportunities of exerciſing his benevolence, which have ſince frequently occurred. The occaſion of this letter was as follows: A

few

few years ago, happening to meet with a family ſinking under a load of ſickneſs and poverty, I wrote an account of their melancholy ſituation to all my friends, and amongſt the reſt to Eugenio, from whom I immediately received this anſwer.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"You oblige me greatly in admitting me into a ſhare of that benevolent ſyſtem which you have adopted; and I ſet you down as much my creditor for the frankneſs of your laſt letter. I ſhall never think my title to that fortune, which chance only has given me, a good one, until I ſee ſome inſtances, in which it has been profitably applied; till, in ſhort, I can convince myſelf, that it might in other hands have turned to a worſe account. As yet, I am able

to

to make out but a very blind title; may it with your aſſiſtance be improved! to you I dare confeſs thus much; and yet how ridiculous, to imagine that want of opportunity can be admitted as an excuſe for not exerciſing that duty, which we profeſs to admire! I am aſhamed to ſay, I am pleaſed with the power of being uſeful to one in diſtreſs; as it argues ſuch an indifference in paſſing by in ſilence ſo many occaſions, where that power has never exerted itſelf. In the preſent inſtance, let me have as large a ſhare as poſſible in eaſing the weight of poverty and ſickneſs; nor let it be too late."

CONVERSATION 8.

On Novels.

THIS afternoon it was debated, whether we ſhould permit the reading of *Novels*. Different opinions were advanced, and there ſeemed to be no probability of coming to a deciſion, till we all turned to Amanda, our FEMALE MENTOR. — She expreſſed herſelf in the following manner:

"THE preſent rage for novels, and "your particular application to me, "lead me to make remarks upon the "general effects, that may ariſe from "the frequent peruſal of theſe publi-"cations. There are books of this "deſcription which deſerve the higheſt "commendation; and when we meet

"with

" with characters ſtruggling with mag-
" naminity under complicated diſtreſſes,
" we may be led to think that they are
" examples worthy of imitation. But
" whether theſe details are conducive
" to the advantage of the two ſexes or
" not, ought to be fully inveſtigated.
" As the characters of a man and
" woman ought to be widely different,
" in like manner their education, which
" has ſo ſtrong an influence on their
" characters, ſhould be, in many par-
" ticulars, totally diſſimilar; hence it
" follows, that what is beneficial to
" one ſex may be detrimental to the
" other; and this obvious concluſion
" will aſſiſt in ſolving the queſtion con-
" cerning the advantage or diſadvantage
" of novels towards forming the youth-
" ful and unexperienced mind. I am
" of opinion that it is very deſirable for

"a young man to form an attach-
"ment to a virtuous woman. Such a
"paſſion calls forth the nobleſt feelings,
"raiſes in his mind an emulation to
"make himſelf worthy of the beloved
"object, and is often the means of in-
"ducing him to apply with increaſed
"diligence to any particular profeſſion,
"buſineſs, or ſcience, which may pro-
"mote his ſucceſs in life. Every ſort
"of reading, therefore, which awakens
"the feelings of virtuous love in his
"breaſt, may ſafely and prudently be
"encouraged.

"But when I conſider a girl, who is
"nearly entering into life with a ſuſ-
"ceptible heart, inſtead of recom-
"mending novels in general to her
"peruſal, I would ſtrongly diſſuade her
"from reading them. Women's ſitu-
"ations are very delicate; their incli-

" nations, when of the pureſt kind, lead
" them to wiſh to pleaſe, and to be-
" come an object of love to one ami-
" able and reſpectable character of the
" other ſex; to one alone their wiſhes
" ought to be bounded, and they ever
" will be ſo, in women that are truly
" amiable. Should we even allow,
" that the generality of novels are writ-
" ten without the leaſt indelicacy, yet
" as their only ſubject is love, why
" ſhould we wiſh to lead the mind to
" that diſpoſition, which nature is ſuf-
" ficiently ready to ſupply without art!
" There is always one hero, on whom
" the heroine fixes her inclination. The
" girl who is converſant with this ſpe-
" cies of compoſition will expect to
" find ſuch an hero in the world;
" the firſt man who pays her any
" particular attention, will ſoon make
" an impreſſion upon her already-pre-

" pared heart; and ſhe will conclude,
" that her partiality is founded on a
" laudable object. But when a man
" is aſſiduous in his attention, and
" ſeems attached, ought ſhe always to
" flatter herſelf that he is in earneſt?
" he appears to like her now; will he
" continue in the ſame inclination?
" may not a little time diſſipate his
" partiality? ſome other woman may
" ſupply her place, or if he ſhould re-
" main conſtant, ſome pecuniary or
" prudent conſideration may prevent
" his making a declaration; or per-
" haps, which is a ſtill harder caſe, he
" may only ſport with her feelings.
" Do not theſe circumſtances, which
" happen every day, render it very
" imprudent in women to work them-
" ſelves up to ſuch a height of enthu-
" ſiaſm for one beloved object, as to
" preclude the poſſibility of their liſten-

"ing to another, who may have the "power and the inclination to make "them happy?

"A very ſenſible woman of my ac-"quaintance once honeſtly confeſſed to "me, that of all the books ſhe had ever "read, the novel of Sir Charles Grandi-"ſon had done her moſt harm. On ex-"preſſing my ſurpriſe that a publication, "which ſet virtue in ſo amiable a light, "ſhould have been productive of harm "to a delicate mind, as I knew hers to "be; ſhe replied, that ſhe had peruſed it "before ſhe came into life, and that "when ſhe was introduced into the "world, ſhe expected to have found in "ſome lover a character ſimilar to that "of Richardſon's Hero; that for ſome "time ſhe had been in a ſtate of continu-"al diſappointment and mortification, "which prevented her from accepting "ſeveral offers that would otherwiſe

" have appeared highly advantageous
" and proper. Theſe romantic notions
" did not leave her, till it was too late:
" — 'And I have now,' ſhe added, 'the
" felicity of being an old maid.'

"I am of opinion, that not more than
" one woman in fifty has it in her power
" to marry the man whom ſhe really
" would prefer to all others. Women
" are to conceal their feelings, although
" they like any of the other ſex, or they
" will appear bold, and become objects
" of ridicule; and a lady of delicacy
" would rather die, than firſt diſcloſe
" her partiality.

" Such being the ſituation of women,
" I would recommend them to read
" hiſtory in preference to novels, and
" to cultivate any particular purſuit to
" which their genius leads them. By
" having their minds properly occupied,
" they will be in leſs danger of forming a

" romantic

" romantic attachment; or if they ſhould
" be caught in the ſnare unexpectedly,
" and ſhould have fixed their affections
" where they can meet with no return,
" they may, by calling reaſon to their
" aid, have ſtrength of mind ſufficient
" to enable them to drive from their
" thoughts, a perſon, whom it may be
" neceſſary for their peace to think of
" no more.

" If I were deſired," Amanda added with a ſmile, " to recommend any novel
" to the younger part of my ſex, it ſhould
" be the Female Quixote, in which a rich,
" amiable, and beautiful young woman
" had ſo filled her head with romances
" and novels, that ſhe fancied every man
" who approached her a lover in diſ-
" guiſe, and every common incident of
" life an adventure. After having nar-
" rowly eſcaped falling a victim to her
" own extravagant conceptions of love

" and chivalry, ſhe had the good for-
" tune to be cured of her diſtemper, to
" become a rational being, and to re-
" nounce the peruſal of thoſe publica-
" tions which led her aſtray."

Amanda did not poſitively give it as her opinion, that no novels ſhould be permitted to be read in this ſociety; yet, as ſhe implied that they were pernicious to the female ſex in general, and as there were many young ladies preſent, the aſſembly agreed to reject that ſpecies of reading.

Still further as an apology for this deciſion, Cleora, a young married woman in her twenty-third year, who poſſeſſed a natural vivacity, and aptneſs of introducing things apropos, related the following anecdote: " A young lady who lived in a retired part of Scotland, but who had friends re-

ſiding

ſiding in Edinburgh, employed her time ſo entirely in peruſing novels and romances, that ſhe contracted a diſlike to hiſtory or any ſerious reading. Her friend, who was accuſtomed to ſupply her with books, being abſent from Edinburgh, ſhe requeſted a gentleman, upon whoſe taſte ſhe could rely, to ſend her a novel or romance: the gentleman forwarded Plutarch's Lives, as ideal characters: ſhe read part of them with ſatisfaction, till ſhe came to Alexander and Julius Cæſar, *names that ſhe had accidentally heard*, upon which ſhe returned the book to the gentleman in diſguſt, and reproached him for the deception."

BOADICEA, BERTHA, PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT, ELEANOR OF CASTILE.

CONVERSATION 9.

On the Queen-Conſorts of England.

AMANDA ſaid that ſhe had ventured to form a plan of amuſement for the ſociety, but as it would engage their time and attention ſeveral evenings, ſhe offered her propoſal with diffidence: if it was approved, ſhe did not mean to engroſs the evenings in rotation, but at thoſe intervals that would be thought moſt eligible by the company. Being deſired to explain herſelf, ſhe thus proceeded:

"As every perſon is poſſeſſed of ſome pride, it is happy, if that pride ariſes from laudable motives. Some are weak enough to feel it for their rank, riches, equipage, or dreſs; for the ſplendour

ſplendour of their entertainments, or the elegance of their tables; others for their beauty and talents. There is a reflected pride which is more praiſe-worthy: a wife who is ſincerely attached to her huſband is proud of the approbation which he receives from the world, or the merit of her children fills the mind of a good mother with this ſublime ſenſation. The pride of the ſex is alſo gratified by accounts of females, who have behaved in trying ſituations with dignity, or who have inſpired their huſbands, brothers, or ſons with more humanity upon any particular occaſion, than they would probably have diſplayed without their interference. I own I feel this pride of my ſex, and impreſſed with this idea have ſketched in regular ſucceſſion the lives and characters of thoſe Queen-Conſorts of England, whoſe adventures are intereſting, or who have excited

the

the attention or applauſe of mankind.

This ſelection may ſeem needleſs, as all our members have the hiſtory of England in their poſſeſſion ready for their peruſal: but as I am moſt deſirous to promote the inſtruction of the younger part of our ſex who frequent the ſociety for improvement and pleaſure, I preſume that the hiſtory of the great or intereſting female characters, brought into one point of view, may make a ſtronger impreſſion, than diſperſed or mingled in the general relation. And now I own, that inſtead of feeling my pride gratified by the many valuable characters which have preſented themſelves, I have been mortified to find ſo few, worthy of ſuch a ſelection. — The recollection however, that very few opportunities offer, which ought to call women into action, and that their greateſt

eſt merit conſiſts in not being known, in ſome meaſure relieved my diſappointment; and the following lines from Pope juſtify that apology.

"But grant in public, men ſometimes are ſhewn,
A woman 's ſeen in private life alone.
Our bolder talents in full light diſplay'd,
Your virtues open faireſt in the ſhade.
So when the ſun's broad beam has tir'd the ſight,
All mild aſcends the moon's more ſober light;
Serene in virgin modeſty ſhe ſhines,
And unobſerv'd the glaring orb declines."

The ſociety approved of Amanda's deſign, and ſhe immediately began.

BOADICEA.

The firſt female character in Engliſh hiſtory which draws our attention, is Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, who, when the emperor Nero ſent Suetonius to conquer England, then in a ſtate of barbariſm, having been treated ignominiouſly by the Romans, headed the Britons

tons with undaunted ſpirit, and attacked with ſucceſs ſeveral ſettlements of her inſulting conquerors. London, which was then a flouriſhing Roman colony, was reduced to aſhes, and ſeventy thouſand of the enemy were deſtroyed. But this carnage was revenged by Suetonius in a great and deciſive battle, where thirty thouſand Britons are ſaid to have periſhed; and Boadicea herſelf, rather than fall into the hands of the enraged victor, put an end to her own life by poiſon. Valour and ſpirit are the leading characteriſtics of this gallant queen; in the preſent age theſe virtues do not ſeem deſirable in a female, but in ſuch ſavage times it was a great mark of a ſuperior ſoul in a woman to defend her kingdom againſt the conquerors of the world; and when ſhe could no longer reſiſt her enemies, to put an end to her own exiſtence, rather than ſubmit

mit to ſlavery. It is neceſſary to obſerve, that as this period was previous to the introduction of chriſtianity into our iſland, the Saxon religion did not teach its followers to ſuffer and ſubmit.

Bertha.

During the heptarchy, Ethelbert king of Kent married, while his father was alive, Bertha, the only daughter of Caribert king of Paris, one of the deſcendants of Clovis, conqueror of Gaul; but before he was admitted to this alliance, he was obliged to ſtipulate, that the princeſs ſhould enjoy the free exerciſe of her religion, which was that of chriſtianity. Bertha brought over a French biſhop to the court of Canterbury, and being zealous for the propagation of her religion, ſhe had been very aſſiduous in her devotional exerciſes, had ſupported the credit of her faith by an irreproachable

proachable conduct, and had employed every art of insinuation and address, to reconcile her husband to her religious principles. Her popularity and influence over Ethelbert paved the way for the reception of the christian doctrine; in a short time it was embraced by the king and his court, and the whole nation by degrees followed his example. Every woman, therefore, who enjoys with gratitude the inestimable comforts of the gospel, must feel a noble pride on reflecting that Bertha, by her good sense, mildness, and propriety of conduct, was the leading instrument of converting our ancestors to christianity.

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT,
Queen-Consort of Edward the Third.

In 1346, Edward the Third undertook the siege of Calais, which was defended by a valiant knight, John de Vienne.

Vienne. While Edward was employed in this ſiege, which laſted near twelve months, David, king of Scotland, taking advantage of the king's abſence, entered Northumberland at the head of fifty thouſand men, and carried his ravages and devaſtations to the gates of Durham. But the queen aſſembling a body of a little more than twelve thouſand men, which ſhe entruſted to the command of Lord Piercy, ventured to approach him at Neville's Croſs, near that city; and riding through the ranks of the army, exhorted every man to do his duty, and to take revenge on thoſe barbarous ravagers; nor could ſhe be perſuaded to leave the field, till the armies were on the point of engaging. The troops animated by her ſpirit, broke the ranks of the enemy, drove them off the field, killed between fifteen and twenty thouſand, and took the king priſoner.

priſoner. Philippa having ſecured her royal captive in the tower, croſſed the ſea at Dover, and was received in the Engliſh camp, before Calais, with all the triumph which was due to her rank, merit, and ſucceſs. John de Vienne, governor of Calais, finding he could no longer reſiſt the attack of the enemy, was obliged to accept the hard terms exacted by the conqueror; that ſix of the moſt conſiderable citizens ſhould repair to Edward's camp bare-headed and bare-footed, with ropes about their necks, carrying the keys of the city in their hands; and on theſe conſiderations the king promiſed to ſpare the lives of the remaining inhabitants. In compliance with theſe ſtern commands, ſix principal burgeſſes, whom hiſtory has immortalized, voluntarily offered themſelves as the required victims; and habited like malefactors,

factors, laid the keys of the city at Edward's feet, and were ordered to immediate execution. It is ſurpriſing, that ſo generous a prince ſhould ever have conceived ſo barbarous an intention againſt ſuch brave men. But the intreaties of his queen ſaved his memory from that infamy; ſhe threw herſelf on her knees, and with tears earneſtly begged the lives of theſe undaunted citizens: having obtained her requeſt, ſhe carried them into her tent, ordered a repaſt to be ſet before them; and after making them a preſent of money and clothes, diſmiſſed them in ſafety.

The preſence of mind and efforts of valour which Philippa diſplayed in England, when the Scots attacked the kingdom, deſerve the higheſt encomiums; but when we ſee this magnanimous woman reduced to the humble poſture of kneeling, and ſhedding tears to reſcue theſe

patriots from deſtruction, we are ready to exclaim, This is indeed an angel!

ELEANOR OF CASTILE.

In the year 1270, Eleanor of Caſtile, who was married to the prince of Wales, afterwards Edward the Firſt, accompanied her huſband in the Cruſades, when he received a wound which was ſuppoſed to have been made by a poiſoned arrow: Eleanor immediately ſucked the wound, that by drawing away the poiſon from him to herſelf ſhe might preſerve his life, which was dearer to her than her own. Eleanor did not meet that death which ſhe expected, but her name is tranſmitted to poſterity as having felt the ſtrongeſt of conjugal attachments. Thomſon has finely worked up this beautiful incident in his tragedy of Edward and Eleonora.

CONVERSATION 10.

On Learned Ladies.

THE Preſident opened the converſation by reading the following letter, which he had received that morning; and deſired the company to give their opinion on the beſt method of reproving the folly of ſuch characters.

"SIR,

"I AM married to a learned wife, and have the misfortune to feel, that this very circumſtance is a perpetual ſource of vexation, and may in the end lead to my ruin. I am a

merchant, mind what is called the main chance, and wiſh to provide for a numerous family. My wife, inſtead of attending to domeſtic concerns, and taking proper care of her children, is ſurrounded by wits and pedants; ſhe is a poeteſs, and paſſes almoſt her whole time in compoſing, tranſcribing, and correcting. In the mean time her family is neglected, and left to the care of ſervants, who waſte thoſe ſums in riot, which ought to be accumulated for the future proviſion of my children. If I bring home a few friends to dinner, the converſation never turns upon mercantile affairs, which would beſt ſuit my gueſts and myſelf, but on profound topics of literature, which we do not underſtand.

Pray, dear ſir, write a letter againſt learned

learned women, and inſert it in the Gentleman's Magazine, which my wife never fails to read, and you will confer a great favour upon your

Humble Servant,

A PLAIN DEALER."

ONE of the party propoſed quoting the following lines out of Beaumont and Fletcher's Wild Gooſe Chaſe, as the beſt way to repreſent to this ſtrange woman the folly of her behaviour:

" Can you ſpeak Greek? No certainly.
Get you gone then,
And talk of ſtars and firmaments, and firedrakes.
Do you remember who was Adam's ſchoolmaſter,
And who taught Eve to ſpin? She knows all theſe;

And will run you over the beginning of the world
As familiar as a fidler.
Can you ſit ſeven hours together and ſay nothing?
Which ſhe will do, and when ſhe ſpeaks, ſpeaks oracles,
Speaks things that no man underſtands, nor herſelf neither."

AN old gentleman with a retentive memory, quoted the following paſſage from an anonymous publication.

"A lady ſhould appear to think well, rather than to ſpeak well of books: ſhe may ſhew the engaging light, that good taſte and ſenſibility always diffuſe over converſation; ſhe may give inſtances of great and affecting paſſages, becauſe they ſhew the fineneſs of her imagination, or the goodneſs

neſs of her heart; but all criticiſm beyond this ſits awkwardly upon her.

I would by all means have a lady know more than ſhe diſplays, becauſe it gives her unaffected powers in diſcourſe; for the ſame reaſon that a man's efforts are eaſy and firm, when his action requires not his full ſtrength. She ſhould by habit form her mind to the noble and pathetic; and ſhe ſhould have an acquaintance with the fine arts, becauſe they enrich and beautify the imagination; but ſhe ſhould careſully keep them out of view in the ſhape of learning, and let them run through the eaſy vein of unpremeditated thought; for this reaſon ſhe ſhould ſeldom uſe, and not always appear to underſtand, the terms of art: the gentlemen will occaſionally explain them to her. I knew a lady of addreſs, who when any

term of art was mentioned, always turned to the gentleman ſhe had a mind to compliment, and with uncommon grace, aſked him the meaning; by this means, ſhe gave men the air of ſuperiority they like ſo well, while ſhe held them in chains. No humour can be more delicate than this, which plays upon the tyrant, who requires an acknowledged ſuperiority of ſenſe, as well as power, from the weaker ſex!"

CLEORA ſeemed much animated during the whole converſation; and as ſoon as the generality of the company had given their opinion upon the Plain Dealer's wife; ſhe ſaid, if it were not too great preſumption, ſhe would write down her ſentiments upon the occaſion. As ſhe was a lady

of

of wit and ſpirit, we were deſirous of hearing what ſhe would produce, and in a ſhort time ſhe compoſed the following letter:

"SIR,

"WHEN the perſon who ſubſcribes himſelf the Plain Dealer laments the misfortune of having too learned a wife, the misfortune, I apprehend, is not becauſe the lady reads the Greek and Latin languages, or has the talents to compoſe a couplet, but becauſe ſhe has not the good ſenſe to conceal her knowledge, and to let it be drawn forth only when it might appear to advantage. A lady ſporting her learning and introducing her verſes upon all occaſions, reminds me of a woman who has a fine hand and arm, a pretty foot, or a beautiful ſet of teeth,

and

and who is not ſatisfied with letting them appear as nature and cuſtom authoriſe, but is perpetually intruding her ſeparate perfections into notice. If a woman neglects the duties of her family and the care of her children, if ſhe is leſs amiable as a wife, mother, or miſtreſs, becauſe ſhe has talents or acquirements, it would be far better if ſhe were without them; and when ſhe diſplays, that ſhe has more knowledge than her huſband, ſhe ſhews, at leaſt, that no woman can have leſs ſenſe than herſelf.

"But I am ſometimes led to think, that men in general are rather narrow-minded, with reſpect to their ideas of women. Every man with an elegant turn of mind, would expect that his wife ſhould underſtand the modern languages. But there are many who would

would be ſhocked, if ſhe ſhould be able to read Homer and Virgil in the originals, or write verſes. But why is there ſuch an unſurmountable barrier to our attaining theſe acquirements; is it not becauſe the men chuſe to dig a trench, and throw up a redoubt, to keep us within the preſcribed limits? They need not however be under the ſmalleſt apprehenſions, leſt we ſhould become their rivals in the purſuits of literature; for as Swift juſtly obſerves, in a letter to a new-married lady, all the knowledge that a woman can attain, is little more than that of a ſchool-boy. In truth, the powers of our mind are as inferior to thoſe of the men, as the ſtrength of our body is to theirs. Yet no reaſon occurs to me why we ſhould not cultivate our underſtandings, and acquire ſuch a proportion of taſte

and

and learning as ſuits our capacity, and is conſiſtent with our reſpective ſituations in life."

The following verſes, written by Honoria, concluded the converſation of the evening.

TO THE MEN.

"I wiſh I could for once conceal
The doubt and diffidence I feel,
Then would I boldly aſk the men
Why women cannot hold the pen?
With greater powers you take your flight
To the divine poetic height:
But we can only hope to pleaſe
Through native elegance and eaſe;
And ſympathy, that ſweetly flows
From the keen ſenſe of human woes—
The tear, the ſigh, the ſmile, the look,
Are taught by nature, not by book;

Are

Are drawn from thoughts the moſt refin'd,
From feelings not to be defin'd;
And when with beauty they combine
How irreſiſtibly they ſhine!
Your ſenſe and learning we admire,
To vie with you we ne'er aſpire;
Except a Montagu appears,
The comet of a thouſand years.
Leave us thoſe charms, thoſe very few,
Which ſurely are ſo much our due:
For they may help to ſoften you."

CON-

CONVERSATION II.

Maxims of Fenelon on Female Education.

AMANDA ſaid ſhe was ſo greatly delighted with the change of character wrought in the duke of Burgundy, and with the character of Fenelon who effected that change, that ſhe thought herſelf particularly fortunate to have met with his treatiſe, *Sur l'Education des Filles*; a work on Female Education, highly approved by the Spectator. That as ſhe had grand-daughters, for whoſe education ſhe was highly intereſted, ſhe was delighted to know the opinion of ſuch a man, whoſe ſyſtem was in general ſo practical, and whoſe mildneſs and ſenſibility, joined to his great talents, rendered him ſo highly qualified to treat upon the ſubject.

She

She had ventured to extract ſome of the ſentiments which appeared to her the moſt ſuitable to our age and country; and with the permiſſion of the company ſhe would read them this evening, under the appellation of *Maxims of Fenelon upon Female Education.*

"THE minds of children are ſimilar to wax, which eaſily takes every impreſſion. Endeavour to imprint a good choice of images on their minds while the characters are eaſily formed, and when no bad impreſſions have been yet made.

"Begin early to teach children patience and docility, otherwiſe they will become violent and impetuous.

"Be as indulgent to them as poſſible; be not irritated by their faults, but pity their weakneſſes. Suffer them to be gay and familiar before you, that you

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you may know their real diſpoſitions. Do not give them a diſtaſte for religion by being too rigid; but rather deſcribe it as it really is, beautiful, juſt, and amiable.

"It is neceſſary to be ſtrict with ſome children; but never employ ſeverity, unleſs on urgent neceſſity, otherwiſe you will break their ſpirit, irritate them if they are violent, or render them ſtupid if they are meek.

"Children are always imitating; this diſpoſition produces infinite miſchief when they are nurtured by perſons of unamiable characters, but is ſometimes productive of great advantage, as they may attain excellence from proper models *.

"Moſt

* The reader will be pleaſed to ſee the opinion of two eminent writers on this ſubject.

"Virtue and wiſdom, like vice and folly, are contagious: and a man may catch the ſpirit of moderation

"Moſt children are fond of ridicule; you ſhould be careful therefore to repreſs this diſpoſition; mimicking and acting

tion and freedom, as well as the ſpirit of perſecution and bigotry, by converſing with men and books."

JORTIN.

"There is nothing that tends more to give the mind its proper bias, than the company and converſation of thoſe who have eminently diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the paths of honour and virtue. Something may be learnt even from the ſilence of a great man. Man is by nature imitative, and the power of example operates upon him by inſenſible but reſiſtleſs force. In morals therefore, as well as in the fine arts, whoever would excel, muſt have the works of the greateſt maſters in view; not indeed as conſtraining guides to be ſervilely followed, but as friendly luminaries that ſerve at once both to enlighten his paths, and to kindle his emulation. It is thus the wiſe, as Homer ſings, and our Britiſh Bard repeats the ſong.—

"The wiſe new wiſdom from the wiſe acquire,
And each brave hero fans another's fire."

MELMOTH'S CATO, Rem. 2.

acting the buffoon convey the idea of forward and unamiable characters. Girls, in learning to draw, ſhould not be permitted to ſketch caricatures.

"Girls are paſſionately fond of things indifferent in themſelves; to guard againſt this folly, do not too often promiſe, as rewards to children, either delicacies of eating or ornaments for the perſon; the latter will give them a taſte for what they ought to deſpiſe, the former will render them epicures.

"Children learn more than is generally imagined from converſation; they catch information imperceptibly, and often apply it properly: be careful therefore what you ſay before them.

"The female ſex too frequently practiſe deceit to obtain their wiſhes: Their tears flow readily, and their paſſions are lively. To prevent this evil, never expoſe

poſe them to a ſituation which requires artifice. Accuſtom them ingenuouſly to communicate their inclinations and ſentiments upon all proper occaſions; inform them, that rectitude of conduct and univerſal probity obtain more confidence and eſteem, and conſequently even more temporal advantages, than art or deceit. This judicious probity has raiſed many individuals to eminent ſituations.

"If girls do not apply *early* to things of ſome ſolidity, they will have neither taſte for them, nor pleaſure in them, afterwards. A mother ſhould by degrees repreſent to her daughter the advantage of rational application; but ſhe ſhould rather make the acquiſition of knowledge a recreation, than a toil, otherwiſe ſhe will cauſe the child to be diſguſted with all improvement.

"Begin to teach children hiſtory, by

relating little tales of intereſting and noble actions, which will engage their attention, enlarge their ideas, and give them a taſte for virtue: this method will lead them, as they grow older, to wiſh to acquire general knowledge, and will render them pleaſing companions.

"But endeavour to guard againſt preſumption, and ſelf-conceit; always praiſe them more when they doubt or aſk for information, than when they ſeem certain of their knowledge: this is the beſt means of infuſing into them gently a proper modeſty of opinion, and of diſcouraging an argumentative manner, which is extremely diſguſting in young females.

"Let not girls miſtake vivacity of imagination and facility of ſpeaking for wit; they will otherwiſe interfere upon all occaſions, and talk and decide upon

ſubjects

ſubjects the leaſt ſuited to their capacity. Tell them, that quickneſs of repartee, and a readineſs of expreſſing themſelves with eaſe and grace, are not eſſential talents, becauſe they are frequently poſſeſſed by women who are deficient in ſolidity of underſtanding; but imprint ſtrongly on their minds, that a diſcreet and regular conduct, and a knowledge when to be ſilent and when to deliver their ſentiments with propriety, are eſſential qualifications which command reſpect and conciliate eſteem.

" Parents frequently encourage girls in ſoftneſs and timidity, bordering on weakneſs, which renders them incapable of being firm and uniform characters. They are perhaps naturally fearful, and they affect to be ſo ſtill more, and thus cuſtom confirms this failing: if you ſhew contempt for theſe

fears and affectations, it will be the moſt effectual way to correct them.

"As an extreme love of refinement is too apt to influence the ſex, repreſent to a young lady, the utility of an accommodating diſpoſition. Since we muſt frequently aſſociate with perſons who are not very refined, and enter into occupations not ſuitable to our taſtes, reaſon, which is true good ſenſe, points out faſtidiouſneſs as a weakneſs of character. A mind that underſtands true politeneſs, and knows how to deſcend to ordinary occupations, is infinitely ſuperior to thoſe exceſſively delicate minds, that are overcome with diſguſt upon every occaſion.

"Endeavour to perſuade young ladies not to imagine that great beauty is the moſt deſirable gift. A beauty idolizes her own perſon more than the moſt

paſſionate lover. Inform them, that beauty deceives the perſon who poſſeſſes it much more than thoſe who are its admirers; and lead them to reflect, that a very few years will rob them of all their charms.—A ſentiment, Amanda added, which is elegantly expreſſed in the following lines, by an anonymous author:

Lo! beauty, ſtill more tranſitory
Fades in the mid-day of its glory!
For nature in her kindneſs ſwore
That ſhe who kills ſhall kill no more;
And in pure mercy doth eraſe
Each killing feature in the face:
Dims the bright luſtre of thoſe eyes,
To which the Gods would ſacrifice;
Dries the moiſt lip, and pales its hue,
And bruſhes off its honied dew;
Plucks from the cheek the damaſk roſe,
E'en at the moment that it blows;
And all the Loves that on it play'd,
Are in a tomb of wrinkles laid.

"Beauty without merit is very little ſerviceable to a girl; ſhe can only expect to draw in a young coxcomb to marry her, with whom ſhe muſt be wretched. But when modeſty and virtue are joined with beauty, the poſſeſſor of theſe qualifications may aſpire to an union with a man of real merit.

"As there are no regulations for dreſs, equipages, or way of living, there are in effect none for the general ſituations in life. Moſt women are diſpoſed to love an oſtentatious diſplay, and are fond of leading the faſhions: this vain ambition frequently ruins families, and the ruin of families muſt draw on the corruption of morals. On one ſide, this parade excites in perſons of a low condition the deſire of appearing above their ſituation, which leads them to commit diſhoneſt actions; on the other hand, it induces perſons of quality, who find

find themſelves without reſources, to be guilty of mean and ſcandalous actions to ſupport their expences; by theſe means are extinguiſhed good faith, probity and ingenuouſneſs, even among the neareſt relations. Endeavour, therefore, to convince young ladies how much more eſtimable that honour is, which is derived from a right conduct, and cultivated underſtanding, than from any oſtentatious diſplay.

"Endeavour to give a young woman a proper ſenſe of the part ſhe is to act, if ſhe marries. She is to have the care of educating her children: of the boys to a certain age, of the girls till they marry. She ought to have a quick diſcernment to find out the natural genius and diſpoſition of each child, to conduct herſelf properly towards them, to diſcover their inclinations, talents, and tempers; to perſuade them by good

good advice, and to correct their errors. She ſhould carefully acquire and preſerve her authority, without loſing their love and confidence.

"A mother of a family ſhould have a proper ſenſe of religion, to be able to inſtil good principles into her children. St. Paul aſſures women, that their ſalvation depends upon well educating their children.

"Many women too much neglect œconomy, particularly thoſe in higher ſtations of life; accuſtomed to affluence and indolence, they diſclaim this virtue, as involving them in unworthy occupations. Teach young ladies, that a miſtreſs of a family ſhould accuſtom herſelf to keep an account of her expences, to know the value of the neceſſaries of life as well as the articles of dreſs, that ſhe may prevent waſte and impoſition. But though ſhe ſhould avoid prodigality,

lity, let her not run into the oppoſite extreme. Avarice gains little, and greatly diſhonours thoſe who are under its influence. A reaſonable woman only practiſes frugality to avoid the ſhame and injuſtice attending an expenſive and ruinous conduct; ſhe retrenches ſuperfluous expences, that ſhe may have it in her power the more liberally to perform acts of friendſhip, benevolence, and charity."

CONVERSATION 12.

Margaret of Anjou, Conſort of Henry the Sixth.

AMANDA began:—"It may appear extraordinary that I ſhould give an account of Margaret of Anjou, whoſe ambition, partiality for particular miniſters, and extreme animoſity againſt all thoſe who oppoſed her favourites, rendered her an odious character in many reſpects, and who was moſt probably the cauſe of raiſing the dreadful conteſt between the houſes of York and Lancaſter. If ſhe had not made Henry's reign obnoxious, he would perhaps, unmoleſted, have tranſmitted the crown to his poſterity. But there is almoſt in every perſon ſomething to praiſe, as well as ſomething to blame; there-

therefore I ſhall ſlightly ſketch the various events of the life of Margaret, not doubting that the bad part of her character will be condemned as it juſtly deſerves, and the worthy part applauded and admired."

ON the death of Henry the Fifth, in 1422, his only ſon Henry the Sixth, an infant, inherited England and the greater part of France. During his minority the great virtues and talents of his uncles, the dukes of Bedford and Glouceſter, maintained him on the throne: when he came of age, he was too weak in his intellects to bear the weight of government; and the duke of Glouceſter, who had been appointed regent during the king's minority, continued to guide the realm. A party, in oppoſition to the duke of Glouceſter, concluded a treaty of marriage between

Henry

Henry and Margaret of Anjou. She was daughter of René, titular king of Naples, Sicily, and Jeruſalem, and duke of Anjou; who with all theſe pompous titles, was the pooreſt prince in Europe: and though ſhe brought no acceſſion of fortune or territory, yet Henry was induced to purchaſe the marriage by the ceſſion of Maine and Anjou to France.

Margaret was the moſt accompliſhed princeſs of the age in perſon and mind, and ſeemed to poſſeſs thoſe talents which would equally qualify her to govern, and ſupply all the weakneſſes and defects of her huſband. Of a maſculine and enterpriſing temper, endowed with ſolidity as well as vivacity of underſtanding; ſhe had diſplayed the power of her mind even in the privacy of her father's family; and it was reaſonable to expect, that when ſhe ſhould aſcend

cend the throne, her talents would break out with ſtill ſuperior luſtre.

On her arrival in England, in 1443, ſhe endeavoured to acquire an entire aſcendancy in all political affairs. Grateful to the party which had raiſed her to the throne; ſhe joined the cabal of the cardinal of Wincheſter, the dukes of Somerſet and Suffolk, againſt the duke of Glouceſter. He was a great and generous character, as unſuſpicious of plots and conſpiracies, as he was incapable of forming them againſt others; and therefore eaſily became the dupe of the artifices of his rivals for power; he was accuſed, arreſted, confined, and as it was ſuppoſed, privately put to death in priſon. How far Margaret was involved in this dreadful tranſaction, does not appear from hiſtory; but it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that a princeſs who had not reached

reached the twentieth year of her age, could not be acceſſary to the murder of her huſband's uncle; and it is probable, that he fell a victim to the revenge and perfidy of his brother the cardinal of Wincheſter, the moſt unprincipled character of that barbarous age. The duke of Suffolk, Margaret's peculiar favourite, ſucceeded the duke of Glouceſter as prime miniſter, and became ſo extremely obnoxious, that an inſurrection took place: to appeaſe the people, Suffolk was arraigned, and condemned to baniſhment; and in his attempt to retire into France, was ſeized and beheaded, by perſons unknown. Somerſet ſucceeded him, as well in the miniſtry and favour of the queen, as in the hatred of the nation.

The adminiſtration of Margaret became ſo unpopular, that Richard duke of York, lineally deſcended from Edward

ward the Third, was induced to advance his right to the throne in preference to the houſe of Lancaſter, and to come forwards as the great leader of oppoſition to the counſels of Margaret: and as the reigning king, always unfit to conduct the helm of government, was at this time ſeized with a mental derangement, which increaſed his natural imbecility, and rendered him incapable of maintaining even the appearance of royalty; the party of the white roſe prevailed over the red roſe; Margaret yielded to the torrent, and Richard was appointed protector during pleaſure. His moderation, however, in being content with the protectorate, and not ſeizing the crown when it was within his graſp, raiſed the hopes of the Lancaſtrians. The king recovered in a certain degree from his indiſpoſition: Margaret, eager to

regain her former influence, made him reſume the reins of government, releaſed Somerſet from the tower, and diſſolved the adminiſtration of the duke of York. This bold meaſure gave birth to inſtant hoſtilities, and the memorable field of St. Alban's, in which the Lancaſtrian party loſt the day, was ſtained with the firſt blood in the fatal quarrel between the rival houſes of York and Lancaſter; a quarrel which continued during a period of thirty-ſix years, was ſignalized by twelve pitched battles, opened a ſcene of extraordinary fierceneſs and cruelty, is computed to have coſt the lives of eighty princes of the blood, and almoſt annihilated the ancient nobility of England.

In 1460, after a variety of ſucceſſes and defeats on both ſides, the competitor of Henry was ſlain, and Margaret

garet ſtained her memory by gazing with delight on his head, which was fixed on a pole over the gates of York. His ſon, who poſſeſſed more ſpirit and leſs ſcruples than his father, repaired to London. Aſſiſted by the earl of Warwick, he was proclaimed king, under the name of Edward the Fourth; and after two decided victories at Towton and Hexham, appeared firmly eſtabliſhed on the throne.

The fate of the unfortunate royal family after theſe defeats was truly ſingular. Margaret flying with her ſon, who was only in the ninth year of his age, into a foreſt, was beſet during the darkneſs of the night by robbers, who deſpoiled her of her rings and jewels, and treated her with the utmoſt indignity. While the robbers were diſputing on the diviſion of the ſpoil, ſhe eſcaped with her ſon into the

thickeſt part of the foreſt, and wandered for ſome time, leading the prince by the hand, till extenuated with hunger and fatigue, they ſunk down upon the ground. In this dreadful ſituation ſhe obſerved a robber approaching with his naked ſword: finding all eſcape impoſſible, ſhe advanced towards him, and preſenting the young prince, exclaimed, "Behold, my friend, the ſon of your king, I commit him to your protection." The man, whoſe humane and generous ſpirit had been obſcured, but not entirely extinguiſhed by his vicious courſe of life, vowed to devote himſelf to their ſecurity, concealed them in the foreſt, and finally conducted them to the ſea coaſt, from whence they made their eſcape into Flanders. She repaired to her father's court, and paſſed ſeveral years in privacy and retirement, brooding over the fate of her de-

poſed

poſed huſband, who was confined in the tower.

In this diſaſtrous ſtate of affairs, Margaret was ſurpriſed by the preſence of the earl of Warwick, who had hitherto been the devoted partiſan of the houſe of York, and the inveterate enemy of the Lancaſtrian party. This great but turbulent nobleman, from his exorbitant influence called The King-maker, had taken umbrage at Edward the Fourth, and offered his ſervices to reinſtate Henry the Sixth. Margaret accepted his offer with joy and gratitude: By her influence a fleet and army was procured in France; Warwick landed at Dartmouth, drove Edward from England, releaſed Henry from the tower, into which place he had been the chief cauſe of throwing him, and proclaimed him king with great ſolemnity.

During theſe troubles, Margaret had remained in France, active in gaining aſſiſtance to reſtore her huſband, and extremely attentive to the education and inſtruction of her ſon. She had ſet him examples of magnanimity, and endeavoured to inſpire him with that true magnanimity which braves danger. She beſought him at the ſame time to neglect nothing, and to fear nothing that could lead to the poſſeſſion of a crown, which heaven had given him a right to enjoy; and to comfort himſelf with the ſame firmneſs, if its loſs ſhould be found inevitable. On the news of Warwick's ſucceſs, Margaret and her ſon were haſtening towards England, but were detained by contrary winds, till a new revolution, no leſs ſudden than the former, plunged them into greater miſery than that from which they had juſt

juſt emerged. In 1470, Edward, impatient to recover his loſt authority, landed in Yorkſhire with a force not exceeding two thouſand men; and partiſans every moment flocked to his ſtandard. Warwick aſſembled an army at Leiceſter, with an intention of giving battle to the enemy; but Edward taking another road, paſſed him unmoleſted, and arrived in London. He was received with acclamations in the city; met the enemy at Barnet, and gained a complete victory over Warwick who was ſlain in the engagement, and took Henry priſoner.

The ſame day in which this deciſive battle was fought, queen Margaret and her ſon, now a promiſing youth about eighteen years of age, arrived at Weymouth. On receiving intelligence of her huſband's captivity, and of the death of the earl of Warwick, her

courage, under ſo many trying circumſtances, did not yet forſake her; and ſhe ſtill determined to defend to the utmoſt the ruins of her fallen fortunes. But her laſt attempt was annihilated by the bloody defeat at Tewkeſbury, and ſhe was almoſt a melancholy witneſs to the butchery of her only ſon. Margaret and her ſon were taken priſoners, and brought to the king: the young prince being aſked in a moſt inſulting manner, how he dared to invade England, more mindful of his high birth than of his preſent fortune, boldly replied, "I came hither to recover my father's kingdom." The ungenerous Edward, irritated by this reply, and inſenſible to pity, ſmote him on the face with his gauntlet, and his attendants taking the blow as a ſignal for farther violence, diſpatched him with their daggers.

From

From this dreadful ſcene, Margaret was conveyed to the tower, and in a few days her unparalleled misfortunes were finally aggravated by the account of Henry's death, who was ſuppoſed to have been privately murdered. She remained in priſon till 1475, in which year a treaty between the kings of France and England ſtipulated her liberty; and Edward, in delivering Margaret from her confinement, exhorted her to enjoy her freedom with tranquillity. A ſolitary impriſonment of five years, which ſucceeded to a variety of numerous calamities, had given ſuch a turn to her temper, that there was little occaſion for this exhortation: but fortune had not yet ceaſed perſecuting this unfortunate queen. In journeying through France to Aix in Provence, where ſhe propoſed reſiding with her father, ſhe took the route through Normandy,

mandy, and ſtopped at a village, with a ſmall retinue, to paſs the night. As the queen had no apprehenſion of being inſulted, ſhe had not taken the precaution of concealing her name. The inn where ſhe baited was filled with Engliſh, whom curioſity, or accident alone, had perhaps drawn thither. But theſe men diſputing on the intereſts of their country, the converſation terminated with groſs invectives and bitter reproaches againſt the queen. Her followers hoped to impoſe ſilence on this mutinous rabble, by aſſuming an air of authority; but the rioters, inflamed by threats, were tranſported with rage, and forcing her attendants to retire into the queen's apartment, ſwore to exterminate the remains of a party which had involved England in ſuch ſcenes of horror; and would have executed their threat, if ſome Frenchmen, drawn thither

thither by the outcries, had not delivered the queen from ſuch impending danger.

From this period (for who counts the ſteps of the unfortunate?) hiſtory is ſilent in regard to a woman, whoſe nod a few years before could pacify or convulſe England. She reſided with her father till his death, which happened in 1480; and followed him to the grave in 1482, in the fifty-third year of her age. This princeſs, who had been ſo active on the ſtage of the world, and who had experienced ſuch a variety of misfortunes, was more illuſtrious for her undaunted ſpirit in adverſity, than for her moderation in proſperity. She ſeems neither to have poſſeſſed the virtues, nor been ſubject to the weakneſſes of her ſex, and was as much tainted by the ferocity, as endowed with the cou-

rage,

rage, of that barbarous age in which ſhe lived. But if there is a valuable leſſon to be drawn from her hiſtory, it is chiefly from that marvellous vigour of mind which made her ſuddenly paſs from the loweſt extremes of debaſement and conſternation to the nobleſt reſolutions and the moſt heroic enterprizes.

Conversation 13.

On Novelty.—Lake of Zirnitz.

The following letter was read by Honoria, who had that morning received it from her brother in the country.

"Dear Sister,

"I often think of the tour on the continent which you propoſed taking with me. If this agreeable ſcheme ſhould ever be accompliſhed, I will endeavour to ſuit my temper with yours; I will fly all the world over with you, provided you lead me on gently with a ſingle hair, and not force me to follow you fettered and bound. We ſhall reſemble Dutch travellers in a foreign country; every thing we meet with will have the grace of novelty.

"Oh!

"Oh! novelty, thou powerful enchantreſs, thou makeſt the hours to glide along imperceptibly, and from the cradle to the grave cheareſt the long dull hour of life. In this ever-trifling ſcene, thy hand-maid curioſity leads the way; ſurprize and joy attend thy ſteps: whether graceful or elegant; whether thou art arrayed in beautiful attire; whether thou aſſumeſt the ſtupendous ſtature of the Iriſh giant, or the diminutive figure of the Poliſh dwarf; ſtill thou attracteſt our attention, till the final ſcene of life is cloſed.

But I had almoſt forgotten my tour; you ſhall be my guide my dear ſiſter; lead me where you will, I ſhall be happy in your company. This may be an airy caſtle, and looks well in theory, though it may never be realized. But whether we travel ſeparate or together; whether I travel with you, or without you;

you; ſtill the charms of novelty may at leaſt be partially yours. I will communicate to you my obſervations upon men and things; new ideas will ariſe as I ſee new objects; and as my mind enlarges, I will endeavour to open your's alſo. In the mean time never let us ſuppoſe, if we are confined to one kingdom, or to one county of that kingdom, that we muſt be contracted in our notions: reading and cultivating our talents will always afford a degree of novelty in our ideas, which will render us pleaſant to ourſelves, and more agreeable to thoſe around us.

" Mark the day from the firſt riſing of the ſun to the cloſing of the twilight, what a variety of different tints and changes! obſerve the difference of characters from the poliſh of a perſon of faſhion, to the ſimplicity of a clown or

a milk-maid. Thoſe who have a true taſte for muſic or poetry, may be ſaid to be almoſt poſſeſſed of a new ſenſe. What inexhauſtible variety ariſes from the ſtudy of nature! what change of characters we meet with in hiſtory! Is it not impoſſible to convey the idioms of different languages by any tranſlation; and has not each language its ſingular excellence? But were I to continue the ſubject of novelty I ſhould never have finiſhed, till you and I are grown ſo old, that there would remain to us no novelty upon earth. Allow me therefore to preſent you for your peruſal, the following account of a natural phænomenon which I have juſt received from a friend on his travels; it will certainly be as new to you as it was to me.

Your's,

VIATOR.

"MY

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I AM now writing from Zirnitz, a ſmall village in Carniola, where I am juſt arrived from viſiting the lake of Zirnitz, which is mentioned in the Philoſophical Tranſactions as a moſt ſurpriſing phænomenon, and of which many marvellous accounts are daily related by travellers, who do not ſufficiently inveſtigate the cauſes of things, and miſtake a ſimple operation of nature for a ſupernatural event. Of this place, which is ſometimes a lake and ſometimes dry land, it has been ſaid that corn is ſowed upon it immediately as the waters have left it; that game of all ſorts are ſpawned in the mud, as of old crocodiles were engendered from the depoſition of the Nile; and that the ſudden retreat of the waters from a

place which they totally covered, is little ſhort of a miracle. I ſhall endeavour in the following relation, to give a plain and ſimple account of this wondrous lake.

" The lake of Zirnitz fills great part of a broad vale, ſeated between riſing hills, which are richly and beautifully wooded; when the water is at the greateſt height, it is ſeven miles long and four broad, and occupies a circumference of at leaſt twenty miles. It is partly ſupplied by a few ſprings, which riſe near a neighbouring village; but the greater part is furniſhed by the rains which deſcend from the bordering hills, or filter through the ground and crevices of the rocks. Theſe collected waters, which force their way through ſubterraneous paſſages, have worn in their courſe deep channels in different parts of the vale, and at length loſe them-

themſelves in numerous caverns formed in the rocks. Whenever the quantity of water ſupplied is not more than ſufficient to fill the ſubterraneous paſſages, the whole vale remains dry; and even ſometimes theſe channels are quite dry, if the ſeaſon has been without rain, and if the water has not been furniſhed by the ſeveral inlets. But whenever the quantity is ſo large, that the ſubterraneous paſſages are full, or in other words, when the influx is ſuperior to the outgoings, then the waters overflow the vale, and form a lake more or leſs large in proportion to the quantity of water retained.

"This is the general theory of this extraordinary lake. It was quite dry when I ſaw it, only one of the channels was provided with a ſmall ſtream, which had been furniſhed by yeſterday's rain, and we traced the current till it loſt it-

ſelf in one of the ſubterraneous hollows. It is ſaid there is a noted ſtone, commonly called the fiſhers-ſtone, which is of ſimilar uſe to the Nileſcope-pillar at Grand Cairo: it is a large ſtone on a ſmall elevation, and whenever it makes its appearance, the fiſhermen know, that in a few days the waters will retire under ground. When that happens, people fiſh in the pits or caverns with nets; and the rapidity with which the waters deſcend allows them only time for a few hawls. Some of the pits are evacuated in thirteen hours, and ſome in twelve hours; when the water has retreated, notice is given to the inhabitants of Zirnitz, upon which numbers aſſemble to look for fiſh among the weeds and ſedge.

"We walked over the valley, now dry land, which a few weeks before was covered with water, and noticed

ſeveral riſing hills fringed with wood, which are iſlands when the lake is full; the largeſt iſland contains ſeveral cottages, and a church upon a little eminence, which has a pleaſing effect. We obſerved ſeveral hollows in the rocks at the bottom of a mountain, into which the water deſcends, and entered one, a natural cavern five feet high, and eight or ten long; the entrance was ſo low, that we crawled upon our hands and knees: in ſome of theſe caverns a noiſe is heard, when it thunders, like the ſound of many drums.

" Towards the borders of the lake or vale are rich riſing hills; the ſoil is conveyed by the waters, and in general produces only reeds and coarſe graſs, but that part which is leſs ſubject to be overflowed is covered with excellent graſs, which, when the waters do not appear, is mowed for hay, or fed by

cattle. There is neither corn nor millet ſowed in the abſence of the lake; and the game probably breed in the iſlands and borders, and come out occaſionally into the valley. One circumſtance is very remarkable, that the lake no ſooner makes its appearance, than it is inſtantly frequented by ſwans and ducks, and other wild fowl. The ſeaſon in which it comes or retires is quite uncertain; but it ſometimes makes its appearance in twenty-four hours, and becomes dry in as ſhort a ſpace of time. This year it was perfectly dry in the month of January; but then it was the dryeſt ſeaſon in the memory of man."

CONVERSATION 14.

Lady Elizabeth Gray.

AMANDA ſaid, "that before ſhe began to read an account of lady Elizabeth Gray, queen-conſort of Edward the Fourth, ſhe begged leave to remind the ſociety, that this period of the Engliſh hiſtory was involved in ſuch darkneſs, and filled with ſo many contradictory narratives of the ſame tranſaction, as rendered it extremely difficult to develope the truth. She added, ſhe was well aware that the character of Richard the Third, who had ſo large a ſhare in the misfortunes of the lady Elizabeth had been variouſly repreſented by his enemies and apologiſts; and that even the murder of Edward the Fifth and the duke of York had been

called in queſtion. But as critical hiſtory is not the province of females, ſhe had not attempted to enter into ſuch abſtruſe diſquiſitions; but had ſelected from the different hiſtorians ſuch facts as appeared to her moſt probable and leaſt controverted; and with that apology ſhe ſhould begin her imperfect narration."

LADY ELIZABETH GRAY.

WHEN king Edward the Fourth was eſtabliſhed on the throne by the captivity of Henry the Sixth, being deſirous of enſuring the friendſhip of France, he diſpatched in 1464 the earl of Warwick to Paris, to demand in marriage the princeſs Bona of Savoy, ſiſter of Charlotte, queen of Louis the Eleventh. His propoſals were accepted; the treaty was concluded; and nothing was wanting to complete the eſpouſals

but

but the ratification of the terms, and the arrival of the princeſs in England. But while policy was acting abroad, love on a ſudden changed the whole ſcene at home.

Elizabeth daughter of the ducheſs of Bedford, by a ſecond marriage with ſir Richard Wideville, was remarkable for the grace and beauty of her perſon: ſhe had married Sir John Gray of Groby, to whom ſhe bore ſeveral children. Her huſband being killed as he was fighting on the ſide of the houſe of Lancaſter, and his eſtate being confiſcated, his widow retired to her father's ſeat at Grafton in Northamptonſhire, and was involved in great diſtreſs. At this period, Edward the Fourth being on a hunting party, paid an accidental viſit to the ducheſs of Bedford. He was a prince who excelled in beauty of perſon and dignity of addreſs; no leſs renowned

in

in feats of gallantry, than in deeds of arms; and poſſeſſed a heart eaſily ſuſceptible of ſoft impreſſions. The occaſion ſeemed favourable; the young widow flung herſelf at his feet, and with many tears entreated him to take pity on her impoveriſhed and diſtreſſed children. The ſight of ſo much beauty in affliction ſtrongly affected the amorous Edward; love ſtole inſenſibly into his heart under the guiſe of compaſſion, and her ſorrow, ſo becoming a virtuous matron, made his eſteem and regard quickly correſpond with his affection. He raiſed her from the ground with aſſurances of favour; he found his paſſion increaſe every moment by the converſation of the amiable object; and he was ſoon reduced in his turn to the poſture and ſtile of a ſuppliant at the feet of Elizabeth. But the lady diſdainfully repulſed her royal lover, declaring

claring that although ſhe knew herſelf unworthy to be a queen, yet ſhe valued her honour and perſon more than to be the greateſt prince's concubine; and all the endearments and careſſes of the young and amiable monarch proved fruitleſs againſt her rigid and inflexible virtue. At length his paſſion, irritated by oppoſition, and increaſing by veneration for ſuch honourable ſentiments, he reſolved to ſhare his throne, as well as his heart, with a woman, whoſe beauty of perſon and dignity of character rendered her worthy of both. On the firſt of May 1464 the marriage was privately celebrated at Grafton.

It has been aſſerted that Warwick, deeming himſelf affronted at the breach of the treaty of marriage and his recall, retired from court in diſguſt, and inſtantly joined the Lancaſtrian party. But this account has been recently

ſhewn

ſhewn to be falſe by Henry, in his Hiſtory of Britain, who has proved from unqueſtionable evidence, that in September 1464, when Edward declared his marriage, the earl of Warwick himſelf aſſiſted in leading Elizabeth to the abbey church at Reading, and in publicly declaring her queen; that he likewiſe ſtood godfather to the princeſs Elizabeth, of whom the queen was delivered in February 1465; and received many honours and appointments from Edward, ſubſequent to his return from France.

In fact, Elizabeth undoubtedly occaſioned the defection of the earl of Warwick, but from another cauſe. Her relations, by whom ſhe was implicitly governed, deriving influence from her elevation, monopolized the powers and principal offices of ſtate, and endeavoured to remove from court all perſons

ſons who had any influence over the king. On their repreſentations, Elizabeth infuſed jealouſies into the mind of her doating huſband, and gradually eſtranged him from the earl of Warwick, to whom Edward principally owed his elevation. The earl's haughty and unbending ſpirit could not brook to ſee ſuch high favours and honours beſtowed on the queen's relations; and was more particularly irritated againſt them, from a conviction that they were ardently endeavouring to diminiſh the wealth, power, and influence of his family, in order to increaſe their own. Elizabeth and her relations raiſed alſo the reſentment of the king's brother the duke of Clarence. He thought himſelf neglected by the king, and imputing that neglect to the influence of the queen, united himſelf to Warwick,

married

married his eldeſt daughter and co-heireſs of his vaſt eſtates; and this union was ſoon followed by an open rebellion, by the aſcendancy of the Lancaſtrian party, the flight of Edward, and the temporary reſtoration of Henry the Sixth. Elizabeth, the cauſe of all theſe revolutions, ſeeing the king fled, and with him all hopes of ſafety, and all friends vaniſhing with proſperity, retired privately from the tower at midnight; and with her daughter and a few faithful friends, took ſhelter in the ſanctuary of Weſtminſter. In this melancholy abode, ſhe was delivered, on the fourth of November 1470, of her eldeſt ſon the unfortunate Edward, whoſe birth, while his mother was in this ſtate of ſecluſion from the world, ſeemed a prophetic prelude to his fatal cataſtrophe. From this

diſtreſs Elizabeth was relieved by the triumphant return and reſtoration of Edward the Fourth; and her misfortunes ſeemed only to have overtaken her to render her power ſtill greater, and the influence of her family more conſpicuous than ever. Her ambition, inflamed by their temporary degradation, excited from her doating huſband continual marks of favour and diſtinction.

But the mind of Elizabeth was not ſo warped by ambition or ſteeled by reſentment, as to forget the ſentiments of benevolence and pity, on Edward's recovery of the throne. When queen Margaret was committed to the tower, it was judged expedient, from her well-known ſpirit of intrigue, to deny her the privilege of ſeeing or holding correſpondence with any of her relations or partizans. Elizabeth had felt the vicif-

viciſſitudes of fortune, and ſchooled in adverſity might ſay, with the poet,

"What ſorrow was, thou badſt her know,
And from her own, ſhe learnt to melt at others woe."

She accordingly exerted her influence over Edward in favour of Margaret, and obtained for her the permiſſion of ſeeing a few friends, and acquiring ſuch other indulgencies as might in ſome meaſure mitigate the rigours of impriſonment.

Happy for herſelf and children, if Elizabeth had always humanely interfered in favour of the unfortunate; and if, incited by her relations, ſhe had not aſſiſted in urging Edward to a deed of cruelty, which proved fatal to her own family. Clarence, who had been reſtored to favour by a defection from the earl of Warwick, and had a principal ſhare in the total defeat of the Lan-

Lancaſtrians, and the reſtoration of Edward, had never been ſufficiently rewarded for theſe important ſervices. His conduct in eſpouſing the daughter of the earl of Warwick, the great enemy of the houſe of York, in ſuffering himſelf to be declared prince of Wales and ſucceſſor to Henry the Sixth, left laſting impreſſions on Edward's mind, not to be effaced by his ſubſequent treachery to Warwick and Henry. The diſpleaſure and jealouſy of the king was fomented by the queen and her relations; and it was principally at their ſuggeſtion, that the weak and imprudent Clarence was arreſted for high treaſon, impriſoned, and put to death; that his ſon, the earl of Warwick, was attainted, his fortune confiſcated, and ſeveral of Clarence's eſtates granted to the earl of Rivers, the queen's brother, under the hypocritical pre-

tence, that it would be an advantage to his ſoul after death, that his eſtates ſhould be poſſeſſed by a man whom he had ſo much injured during his life.

Although Richard duke of Glouceſter ſhared in the imputation of co-operating in the ruin of Clarence, yet that artful prince contrived to throw the principal blame on the queen and her relations, and thus increaſed their unpopularity. Violent diſputes took place between them and the great officers of the court; and although Edward on his death-bed apparently effected a reconciliation, as the only means of ſecuring the quiet ſucceſſion to his ſon, yet this reconciliation was only feigned, and on the king's deceaſe both parties ſtrove to ſecure the perſon of the young monarch, and with it the adminiſtration of affairs.

The party of Elizabeth had taken every

every precaution for this purpoſe. Her brother, earl Rivers, the moſt accompliſhed nobleman of the age, was appointed his governor; Richard lord Gray, her ſon by her firſt huſband, had a diſtinguiſhed place in his houſehold; her eldeſt ſon, lately created the marquis of Dorſet, was made governor of the tower, and by that means was in poſſeſſion of the arms and treaſure; and the queen inſtantly ſent orders to eſcort the young king to London with a train of two thouſand horſe. But theſe very precautions haſtened, if they did not occaſion, the ruin of her family, and the dethronement of her ſon.

The party in oppoſition to the queen was chiefly headed by lord Haſtings and the duke of Buckingham, who dreaded to ſee the power veſted in the hands of her family; and Richard, duke of Glouceſter, who, as firſt prince of the

blood, was by the laws of the kingdom entitled to the regency, conceived ſuſpicions, that the queen intended to exclude him from the adminiſtration, and to govern in concert with her own family.

While Elizabeth was endeavouring in London to increaſe her party, ſhe received the alarming intelligence, that her brother earl Rivers, her ſon lord Richard Gray, and the other officers of the houſehold, who were of Elizabeth's party, were ſeized at Stoney Stratford, where the king was arrived in his way to London; that all his attendants were diſmiſſed, and a proclamation publiſhed expelling them from court; that the perſon of young Edward was likewiſe ſecured; and that the duke of Glouceſter, juſt returning from a ſucceſsful expedition againſt the Scots, after having proclaimed his nephew, king

Edward

Edward the Fifth, and making the ſtrongeſt profeſſions of loyalty and reſpect, was accompanying his royal charge to London. On the firſt news of theſe alarming tranſactions, Elizabeth took ſanctuary in Weſtminſter, with her ſecond ſon the duke of York, and her five daughters. She truſted, that the eccleſiaſtical privileges which had formerly afforded her protection againſt the Lancaſtrian party, would not now be violated by her brother-in-law, while her ſon was ſeated on the throne; and ſhe reſolved there to await the return of better fortune.

Meanwhile Richard accompanied the king to London, riding bare-headed before him, and repeatedly calling to the people, "Behold your king," conducted him in pomp to the tower of London. He was declared protector by the council of ſtate, and iſſued orders

for the coronation of the young king. His immediate acceſſion to power was ſtained with the execution of earl Rivers, lord Richard Gray, and lord Haſtings; becauſe thoſe noblemen were likely to oppoſe his deſigns on the crown. Before the queen was made acquainted with theſe ſcenes of horror, Richard, anxious to ſecure the perſon of the duke of York, deputed the two archbiſhops of Canterbury and York, and ſeveral lords of the council, to repreſent to the queen her ill-grounded apprehenſions, and the neceſſity of the young prince's appearance at the enſuing coronation of his brother.

The deputies found the unhappy queen ſurrounded by her weeping children, ſitting on the floor bathed in tears, and bewailing the approaching deſtruction of herſelf and family. The two prelates were known to be perſons of integrity

tegrity and honour, and being themſelves perſuaded of the ſincerity of the duke's intentions, they employed every argument accompanied with zealous entreaties, exhortations, and aſſurances, to bring Elizabeth over to the ſame opinion. She perſevered in her reſolution for a great length of time, and urged that the duke by continuing within thoſe ſacred walls was not only ſecure himſelf, but alſo gave ſecurity to the king, whoſe life no one would dare attempt while his ſucceſſor and avenger remained in ſafety. But finding that no one ſupported her in her ſentiments, and that force, in caſe of refuſal, was threatened by the council, ſhe at laſt complied. On preſenting her ſon, ſhe ſaid to him, "Farewell, my ſweet ſon, "the Almighty be thy protector! let me "kiſs thee once more before we part, for "God knows when we ſhall kiſs again!"

Having embraced him, ſhe bedewed his cheeks with tears, bleſſed him, turned from him, wept, lifted her hands and eyes to heaven, and then went away, leaving the child with the lords, weeping alſo for her departure.

The protector had no ſooner ſecured the perſon of the duke of York, than he brought forwards his deſign of ſeizing the crown; and the queen and her family were ſo obnoxious to the nobility, and ſo odious to the nation in general, that he found little difficulty in effecting his purpoſe, by a moſt improbable and diſhonourable falſity. His emiſſaries aſſerted, that Edward the Fourth, before his marriage with the lady Gray, had ſecretly eſpouſed lady Elizabeth Talbot, widow of lord Butler, and daughter of the earl of Shrewſbury. This idle tale was believed; his marriage with Elizabeth was declared illegal, his chil-

dren baſtardiſed and ſet aſide, and Richard aſſumed the crown. The depoſed monarch and his brother were confined in the tower, and were ſuppoſed to have been murdered by order of the inhuman uſurper. The eſtates of the queen-mother were confiſcated, and that unfortunate princeſs reduced to poverty and overwhelmed with diſgrace, had no other alternative than to leave the ſanctuary, and put herſelf and her five daughters into the hands of the uſurper of her ſon's throne. Richard took a ſolemn oath in the houſe of peers, that they ſhould be in no danger of their lives, that he would allow her ſeven hundred marks a year, give to each of her daughters a portion of two hundred marks, and marry them to gentlemen. "How diſhonourable," ſays Henry, in his Hiſtory of Britain, "a tranſaction was this! a king of Eng-

"land

" land ſwearing before his ſpiritual and
" temporal lords, that he would not
" murder five innocent young ladies,
" the daughters of his own brother,
" and of their late ſovereign! How pi-
" tiful a proviſion did Richard propoſe
" to make for his unhappy nieces, who
" he knew had lately ſtood contracted
" to the greateſt princes in Europe! and
" yet, ſuch was the diſtreſs of the
" wretched queen, that ſhe accepted
" theſe humiliating terms, and truſted
" her own life and the lives of her
" daughters to the ſecurity of Richard's
" oath."

Thus reduced to the ſtate of a private gentlewoman, Elizabeth looked forwards with hopes to the preparations of the earl of Richmond, and promiſed to beſtow her eldeſt daughter Elizabeth on him who was conſidered as chief of the Lancaſtrian party. But while ſhe

was

was ſecretly abetting this plot againſt the uſurper, Richard, well aware that the whole ſucceſs of Richmond's plan depended on his marriage with the princeſs, and being a widower by the death of his wife Anne, formed the deſign of defeating the ſcheme of his enemies, by eſpouſing his niece Elizabeth; and as kings court the fair with great advantage, and the luſtre of a crown is apt to dazzle the brighteſt eyes; both the young princeſs and the queen her mother conſented to this unnatural alliance with a man, who had done them the moſt cruel injuries, but now enticed them by the moſt tempting promiſes. The queen communicated the deſign to her ſon the marquis of Dorſet, who was at Paris with the earl of Richmond, and intreated him to return to England to receive the honours that had been promiſed him by Richard. This conduct

duct cannot be juſtified, unleſs we ſuppoſe, what is not improbable, that Elizabeth, in whoſe cabinet was firſt laid the plan of the great confederacy, which overthrew the throne of Richard, deceived the king by falſe promiſes, and was continuing her negociations with the earl of Richmond, and urging him to haſten his invaſion at the moment that ſhe affected to accept the alliance of Richard. Richmond, alarmed with the news of this intended marriage, haſtened his preparations; landed in England, and being joined by numerous bodies, who flocked to his ſtandard from all parts, he defeated and killed Richard at the battle of Boſworth-field, and ſeated himſelf on the throne, under the name of Henry the Seventh.

Elizabeth ſeemed now to have attained the height of human felicity. She

ſaw

ſaw the man who had injured her own honour, uſurped her ſon's throne, and murdered her fanily, dethroned by the earl of Richmond, who had promiſed to marry her daughter, and by uniting the two roſes, ſhe gave peace and tranquillity to her diſtracted country, ſo long torn to pieces by civil diſcord.

But the chagrin of Elizabeth was only to be terminated with her life. Inſtead of expreſſing his gratitude to Elizabeth for having firſt laid the plan of the great confederacy, to which he owed his elevation; the gloomy and malignant Henry never forgave her conſent to the alliance with Richard, and treated her with coolneſs and reſerve. Unwilling to appear as if he owed his crown to his marriage with the heireſs of the houſe of York, he delayed two years the celebration of that ceremony. The general joy which his ſubjects teſtified

tified at the marriage filled him with diſpleaſure. His ſuſpicions diſturbed his tranquillity, bred diſguſt towards his queen, poiſoned all his domeſtic enjoyments; and the malignant ideas of party prevailed in his ſullen mind over all the ſentiments of gratitude to the queen-dowager, and affection towards his virtuous and obſequious conſort.

The queen-dowager brooding over theſe diſappointments, ſeeing her daughter treated with ſeverity, herſelf excluded from the ſmalleſt ſhare of authority, her friends in diſgrace, and her party perſecuted, conceived againſt Henry the moſt violent reſentment. As ſhe was preparing again to diſcover that character of ambition and intrigue which ſhe had betrayed during the reign of her huſband, and the uſurpation of Richard, ſhe was ſuddenly arreſted and impriſoned in the abbey of Bermondſey.

In

In excuſe for ſo arbitrary and violent an act, it was alledged that notwithſtanding a ſecret agreement to marry her daughter to Henry, ſhe had yielded to the ſolicitations and menaces of Richard, and delivered that princeſs and her ſiſters into the hands of the tyrant. This crime, if ſuch it could be called, now become obſolete, was ſuppoſed not to be the real cauſe of the ſeverity with which ſhe was treated; and it was credited, or at leaſt Henry himſelf believed, that ſhe ſecretly countenanced the report that the duke of York had eſcaped from the tower, and that ſhe abetted the impoſture of Lambert Simmel, who perſonated the earl of Warwick, and was publicly proclaimed king at Dublin, under the name of Edward the Sixth. Theſe ſuſpicions were afterwards the more confirmed, when it was found that

the

the unfortunate queen dowager, though ſhe ſurvived this diſgrace ſeveral years, was never treated with more lenity: her large eſtates were confiſcated, and ſhe ended her life, which had been chequered with ſuch various fortunes, as lord Bacon in his life of Henry the Seventh ſays, "in priſon, poverty, and ſolitude."

The merit of Elizabeth conſiſted in her prudent and virtuous conduct towards Edward before ſhe became his wife; in her compliance with his temper after marriage, and patience under his numerous infidelities; in her humamanity towards the dethroned queen Margaret; and in the eminent protection which ſhe afforded to literature by founding Queen's college, in the univerſity of Cambridge. Her principal defects were a reſtleſs ambition, and too great a partiality to her relations,

which

which was the cauſe of all her misfortunes.

I cannot better conclude this account of the lady Elizabeth Gray, than by the following reflections of lord Bacon. "This lady was amongſt the examples "of great variety of fortune. She had "firſt, from a diſtreſſed ſuitor and diſ-"conſolate widow, been taken to the "marriage bed of a bachelor-king, the "goodlieſt perſonage of his time; and "even in his reign ſhe had endured a "ſtrange eclipſe by the king's flight, "and temporary depriving from the "crown. She was alſo very happy, in "that ſhe had by him fair iſſue, and "continued his nuptial love (helping "herſelf by ſome obſequious bearing "and diſſembling of his pleaſures) to "the very end. She was much affec-"tionate to her own kindred, even un-"to faction; which did ſtir great envy

" in the lords of the king's ſide, who
" counted her blood as a diſparage-
" ment to be mingled with the king's.
" With which lords of the king's blood,
" joined alſo the king's favourite the
" lord Haſtings; who notwithſtanding
" the king's great affection to him, was
" thought at times, through her malice
" and ſpleen, not to be out of danger
" of falling. After her huſband's death,
" ſhe was matter of tragedy; having
" lived to ſee her brother beheaded, and
" her two ſons depoſed from the crown,
" baſtarded in their blood, and cruelly
" murthered. All this while neverthe-
" leſs ſhe enjoyed her liberty, ſtate and
" fortunes. But afterwards again, upon
" the riſe of the wheel, when ſhe had a
" king to her ſon-in-law, and was made
" grandmother to a grandchild of the
" beſt ſex; yet was ſhe (upon dark and
" unknown reaſons, and no leſs ſtrange
" pretences)

" pretences) precipitated and baniſhed
" the world into a nunnery; where it
" was almoſt thought dangerous to vi-
" ſit her, or to ſee her; and where not
" long after ſhe ended her life; but was
" by the king's command buried with
" the king her huſband at Windſor."

Conversation 15.

On the Character of Imogen.

At the laſt meeting the converſation turned upon the excellence of Shakeſpeare; but ſeveral ladies aſſerted that he certainly had no very favourable opinion of women, becauſe moſt of his female characters were either inſipid or wicked. Some perſons remarked, that in his days there were no women on the ſtage; and that men could ill ſupply the delicacy of female characters. Cleora ſtood forth the champion of our admired bard, and ſaid, that if he had not many excellent female characters, he had at leaſt delineated one which could not be ſurpaſſed by any author. Imogen, in the tragedy

tragedy of Cymbeline, was the character to which ſhe alluded; nor could the warmeſt imagination conceive a more perfect woman; as ſhe would endeavour to ſhew on the next meeting. Accordingly Cleora read the following remarks:

THE firſt intereſting part where Imogen appears, is in the act of taking leave of Poſthumus her huſband, who is baniſhed by the king her father: yet in this diſtreſsful moment, ſeparated from the perſon the deareſt to her in the world, ſhe ſhews no reſentment againſt her father; but only a proper firmneſs to bear thoſe ills he chooſes to inflict upon her:

"My deareſt huſband,
I ſomething feel my father's wrath; but nothing

(Always reſerv'd my holy duty) what
His rage can do on me. You muſt be gone,
And I ſhall here abide the hourly ſhot
Of angry eyes; not comforted to live,
But that there is this jewel in the world,
That I may ſee again."

When ſhe is taking leave, the king her father enters, reproaches, drives Poſthumus away with the moſt contumelious language, and extorts from her the following tender expreſſions of regret for her huſband's departure:

" There cannot be a pinch in death
More ſharp than this is."

And after Cymbeline vents his anger againſt her,

" O diſloyal thing!
That ſhould'ſt repair my youth, thou heapeſt
many
A year's age on me"—

She

She is ſo wholly abſorbed in grief for the loſs of Poſthumus, that ſhe is inſenſible to every other circumſtance, even to her father's unkindneſs, which at another time ſhe feels moſt exquiſitely.

" I beſeech you, Sir,
Harm not yourſelf with your vexation;
I'm ſenſeleſs of your wrath; a touch more rare
Subdues all pangs, all fears."

When the king reproaches her for marrying Poſthumus—

" Thou took'ſt a beggar; would'ſt have made
my throne
A ſeat for baſeneſs"—

Imogen replies,

" No, I rather added
A luſtre to it.
King. Oh thou vile one!
Imo. Sir,
It is your fault that I have lov'd Poſthumus;

You bred him as my play-fellow; and he is
A man worth any woman; over-buys me
Almoſt the ſum he pays."

In the next ſcene, where Piſanio informs her that he had taken leave of Poſthumus, and ſeen him embark, how beautifully is her affection expreſſed:

Imo. " I would thou grew'ſt unto the ſhores o' th' haven,
And queſtioned'ſt every ſail: if he ſhould write,
And I not have it, 'twere as a paper loſt
With offer'd mercy in it. What was the laſt
That he ſpake with thee?

Piſ. 'Twas, " His Queen, his Queen!"

Imo. Then wav'd his handkerchief?

Piſ. And kiſs'd it, Madam.

Imo. Senſeleſs linen, happier therein than I!
And that was all?

Piſ. No, Madam; for ſo long
As he could mark me with his eye, or I
Diſtinguiſh him from others, he did keep
The deck, with glove, or hat, or handkerchief,
Still waving, as the fits and ſtirs of 's mind

Could

Could beſt expreſs how ſlow his ſoul ſail'd on,
How ſwift his ſhip.

Imo. Thou ſhould'ſt have made him ev'n
As little as a crow, or leſs, ere left
To after-eye him.

Piſ. Madam, ſo I did.

Imo. I would have broke mine eye-ſtrings; crack'd 'em, but
To look upon him; 'till the diminution,
From ſpace, had pointed him ſharp as my needle;
Nay, follow'd him, 'till he had melted from
The ſmallneſs of a gnat, to air; and then
Have turn'd mine eye, and wept.—But, good Piſanio,
When ſhall we hear from him?

Piſ. Be aſſur'd, Madam,
With his next vantage.

Imo. I did not take my leave of him, but had
Moſt pretty things to ſay: ere I could tell him,
How I would think on him, at certain hours,
Such thoughts, and ſuch; or, I could make him ſwear,
The She's of Italy ſhould not betray

Mine

Mine intereſt, and his honour; or could charge him,
At the ſixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,
T'encounter me with oriſons; (for then
I am in heaven for him) or ere I could
Give him that parting kiſs, which I had ſet
Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father;
And, like the tyrannous breathing of the north,
Shakes all our buds from blowing.

When Jachimo alarms her fears, and raiſes her jealouſy for her huſband's conduct, how feelingly ſhe ſays,

"You do ſeem to know
Something of me, or what concerns me; pray you,
(Since doubting things go ill, often hurts more
Than to be ſure they do; for certainties
Or are paſt remedies, or timely known,
The remedy's then born) diſcover to me
What both you ſpur and ſtop."

And

And when he artfully relates pretended tales of her huſband's infidelity, to induce her to be unfaithful in return, and praiſes her beauty, ſhe ſays,

"Away!—I do condemn mine ears, that have
So long attended thee—If thou wer't honourable
Thou would'ſt have told this tale for virtue, not
For ſuch an end thou ſeek'ſt; as baſe as ſtrange"—

Her anger increaſes juſtly, till Jachimo calms her by ſaying,

"Give me your pardon,
I have ſpoke this to know if your affiance
Were deeply rooted."

When Imogen receives a letter from Poſthumus to deſire her to meet him at Milford-Haven, how delightfully animated ſhe appears.

"Oh

" Oh for a horſe with wings! hear'ſt thou,
Piſanio?
He is at Milford-Haven: read, and tell me
How far 'tis thither. If one of mean affairs
May plod it in a week, why may not I
Glide thither in a day? then, true Piſanio,
Who long'ſt like me to ſee thy Lord; who
long'ſt
(Oh let me bate) but not like me, yet long'ſt
But in a fainter kind——oh, not like me;
For mine's beyond, beyond.——
How far is it
To this ſame bleſſed Milford: and by th' way
Tell me how Wales was made ſo happy, as
T' inherit ſuch a haven!
Pr'ythee, ſpeak,
How many ſcore of miles may we well ride
'Twixt hour and hour?

Piſ. One ſcore 'twixt ſun and ſun,
Madam's enough for you; and too much too.

Imo. Why, one that rode to 's execution,
man,
Could never go ſo ſlow: I've heard of
wagers,

Where

Where horſes have been nimbler than the ſands
That run i' th' clock's behalf—but this is
foolery."

When Piſanio repreſents the difficulties of her eſcape from court, and other embarraſſing circumſtances, attending her journey, ſhe ſays,

" I ſee before me, man; nor here, nor here,
Nor what enſues, but have a fog in them,
That I cannot look through. Away, I pr'y-
thee,
Do as I bid thee; there's no more to ſay;
Acceſſible is none but Milford-way."

When ſhe arrives at Milford-Haven, in the full expectation of meeting Poſthumus, how admirably is her diſtreſs painted upon ſeeing Piſanio's miſery.

" Where is Poſthumus? What is in thy
mind
That makes thee ſtare thus? wherefore breaks
that ſigh

From

From th' inward of thee? one, but painted thus,
Would be interpreted a thing perplex'd
Beyond ſelf-explication. Put thyſelf
Into a 'haviour of leſs fear, ere wildneſs
Vanquiſh thy ſteadier ſenſes."

When Piſanio gives her the letter, ſhe ſays,

" Speak man; thy tongue
May take off ſome extremity, which to read
Would be ev'n mortal to me."

When ſhe has read the letter, and finds that Poſthumus accuſes her of infidelity, how mildly and pathetically ſhe proclaims her innocence, in a manner which no guilty perſon could do:

" Falſe to his bed! what is it to be falſe?
To lie in watch there, and to think on him?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? if ſleep charge nature,
To break it with a fearful dream of him,
And cry myſelf awake? that falſe to's bed?"

When ſhe ſubmits to die, how great is her fortitude and compoſure, and what angelic patience:

" When thou ſeeſt him,
A little witneſs my obedience. Look!
I draw the ſword myſelf; take it, and hit
The innocent manſion of my love, my heart;
Fear not, 'tis empty of all things but grief:
Thy maſter is not there, who was indeed
The riches of it. Do his bidding, ſtrike;
Thou may'ſt be valiant in a better cauſe,
But now thou ſeem'ſt a coward."

When Piſanio ſays,

" Hence, vile inſtrument!
Thou ſhalt not damn my hand"—

how greatly ſhe ſhews her love for her huſband, and the impoſſibility of her wiſhing for life under his diſapprobation: but tho' ſhe longs for death, her religion forbids ſelf-murder—

" Why, I muſt die;
And if I do not by thy hand thou art

No ſervant of thy maſter's. 'Gainſt ſelf-ſlaughter
There is a prohibition ſo divine
That cravens my weak hand: come, here's my heart—
(Something's afore 't—ſoft, ſoft, we'll no defence,)
Obedient as the ſcabbard! What is here?

In her eargerneſs to be killed, how affecting it is to ſee her produce the letters of Poſthumus from her boſom; and in the midſt of her deſire to die, and her miſery at being accuſed, ſhe ſhews her exquiſite love for him, when ſhe ſays,

"And I grieve myſelf,
To think, when thou ſhalt be diſ-edg'd by her
Whom now thou tir'ſt on, how thy memory
Will then be pang'd by me.—Pr'ythee diſpatch,
The lamb entreats the butcher. Where's thy knife?
Thou art too ſlow to do thy maſter's bidding,
When I deſire it too!

When

When Piſanio wiſhes to ſave her life, with what noble ſpirit ſhe exclaims,

" Talk thy tongue weary, ſpeak.
I've heard I am a ſtrumpet; and mine ear
(Therein falſe ſtruck) can take no greater wound."

When Piſanio ſtill exhorts her to live, how feelingly ſhe anſwers,

" Why, good fellow,
What ſhall I do the while? where bide? how live?
Or in my life what comfort, when I am
Dead to my huſband?"

At laſt, with the hope that Poſthumus has been deceived, ſhe conſents to live; reſumes her firmneſs of character, and agrees to diſguiſe herſelf as a boy, and to ſeek a retreat in the ſervice of Lucius the Roman Ambaſſador. Having wandered in the foreſt for two days without food, ſhe ſays,

" I ſhould be ſick,
But that my reſolution helps me.——
Two beggars told me,
I could not miſs my way. Will poor folks lye,
That have afflictions on them, knowing 'tis
A puniſhment, or trial? yet no wonder,
When rich ones ſcarce tell true. To lapſe in fulneſs
Is ſorer, than to lye for need; and falſehood
Is worſe in kings than beggars. My dear Lord!
Thou art one o' th' falſe ones; now I think on thee
My hunger's gone; but even before I was
At point to ſink for food — but what is this?
(ſeeing a cave)
Here is a path to it; 'tis ſome ſavage hold—
'Twere beſt not call; I dare not call: yet famine,
Ere it clean o'erthrow nature, makes it valiant.
Plenty and peace breed cowards; hardineſs ever
Of hardineſs is mother. — Ho! who's here?
If any thing that's civil, ſpeak; if ſavage,
Take or lend — Ho! no anſwer? then I'll enter.

Beſt

Beſt draw my ſword; and if mine enemy
But fear the ſword like me, he'll ſcarcely look
on't.
Grant ſuch a foe, good heavens!"

How intereſting does ſhe appear when, having ſatisfied her hunger, ſhe comes out of the cave, and addreſſes Bellarius and his companions:

"Good maſters, harm me not:
Before I enter'd here I call'd, and thought
T' have begg'd, or bought, what I have took:
good troth
I have ſtol'n nought, nor would not, though
I'd found
Gold ſtrew'd o' th' floor. Here's money for
my meat,
I would have left it on the board, ſo ſoon
As I had made my meal, and parted
With prayers for the provider."

And when ſhe meets with a kind reception, how fine is this ſentiment:

"Great men,
That had a court no bigger than this cave,

That did attend themſelves, and had the virtue
Which their own conſcience ſeal'd them (laying by
That nothing-gift of differing multitudes)
Could not out-peer this twain."

Her remarks upon the two brothers are charming:

"So man and man ſhould be,
But clay and clay differs in dignity,
Whoſe duſt is both alike. I'm very ſick."

Guiderius ſays to his brother,

"Go you to hunting, I'll abide with him."

How pathetic is Imogen's reply;

"So ſick I am not, yet I am not well;
But not ſo citizen a wanton, as
To ſeem to die ere ſick. So pleaſe you, leave me,
Stick to your journal courſe. The breach of cuſtom
Is breach of all. I'm ill; but your being by me
Cannot

Cannot amend me. Society is no comfort to
one
Not ſociable: I am not very ſick,
Since I can reaſon of 't. Pray you truſt me
here,
I'll rob none but myſelf, and let me die
Stealing ſo poorly."

When Imogen awakes from her lethargy, which was occaſioned by the drug ſhe had taken, ſhe incoherently dwells upon her affection for her huſband, and her impatience to meet him.

" Yes, Sir, to Milford Haven; which is the
way?—
I thank you—by yon buſh—pray how far thither?—
'Ods pittikins, can it be ſix miles yet?—
I've gone all night—faith, I'll lie down and
ſleep."

As ſhe lies down ſhe perceives the body of a man beheaded.

" But

"But ſoft! no bedfellow: oh Gods and
Goddeſſes!
The flowers are like the pleaſures of the
world;
This bloody man the cares on't—I hope I
dream;
For ſure I thought I was a cave-keeper,
And cook to honeſt creatures. Tis not ſo;
'Twas but a bolt of nothing, ſhot at nothing,
Which the brain makes of fumes: our very
eyes
Are ſometimes, like our judgment, blind.
Good faith,
I tremble ſtill with fear; but if there be
Yet left in Heav'n as ſmall a drop of pity
As a wren's eye, oh! Gods! a part of it!

How forcible is the following paſſage.

"The dream's here ſtill: ev'n when I wake,
it is
Without me, as within me; not imagin'd, felt.
A headleſs man!—the garments of Poſthu-
mus?"

Then follows her incoherent expreſ-
ſions, on ſuppoſing the headleſs body

to

to be that of Poſthumus murdered by Piſanio. When ſhe is diſcovered by Lucius lamenting over the ſuppoſed Poſthumus, and he demands who ſhe is, ſhe anſwers moſt affectingly,

" I am nothing; or if not,
Nothing to be were better. This was my maſter,
A very valiant Briton, and a good,
That here by mountaineers lies ſlain: alas!
There are no more ſuch maſters: I may
Wander from eaſt to occident, cry out for ſervice,
Try many, all good, ſerve them truly, never
Find ſuch another maſter."

When ſhe is hired by Lucius ſhe ſays,

" I'll follow, Sir. But firſt, an't pleaſe the Gods,
I'll hide my maſter from the ſkies, as deep
As theſe poor pickaxes can dig: and when,
With wild wood-leaves and weeds, I've ſtrew'd his grave,

And on it ſaid a century of prayers,
Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep, and ſigh;
And, leaving ſo his ſervice, follow you,
So pleaſe you entertain me."

When Imogen finds Poſthumus alive, and that he is convinced of her innocence, the only reproach ſhe makes him for his cruel ſuſpicions is,

"Why did you throw your wedded lady
from you?"

Before the concluſion ſhe proves her unambitious character and true diſintereſtedneſs. When Cymbeline diſcovers his two ſons, he ſays to her,

"O Imogen,
Thou haſt loſt by this a kingdom."

She replies,

"No my Lord,
I've got two worlds by it. O my gentle brothers,
Have we thus met?"

Theſe

Theſe paſſages, which are ſelected from the ſpeeches of Imogen, may be eſteemed the moſt ſtriking and beautiful parts; but ſcarcely any line can be read where ſome ſublime ſentiment is not expreſſed, or ſome indication of a firm and virtuous mind is not diſplayed. To detail all the beauties of this character, would be to detail all the ſpeeches of Imogen, and cannot fail of pleaſing every reader of delicacy and diſcernment, becauſe ſhe is feminine and natural. She appears to be almoſt a perfect character. Her only error was that of marriage without parental authority; for which ſhe apologizes when ſhe ſays—"Sir, It is "your fault that I have loved Poſthu-"mus; you bred him as my play-fel-"low, and he is a man worth any "woman."—But the poet has juſtly

made this only reprehenſible part of her conduct as the cauſe of her misfortunes.

Imogen is placed in a variety of diſtreſſing ſituations; and moſt perſons will agree, that were ſhe to act differently in any one particular from what ſhe does, ſhe would not act ſo well. She diſplays the ſtrongeſt conjugal affection, contained within the bounds of delicacy; duty and ſubmiſſion to her father, as far as is conſiſtent with her ſuperior duty to her huſband; ſhe is ſteady in her chaſtity, tho' artfully led to believe that her huſband was unfaithful, and even abandoned to every thing that was diſſolute. She is not outrageous when ſhe is accuſed of incontinency, though the accuſation is worſe to her than death. She ſhews no ill-will to Poſthumus, though he orders her to be murdered; and anticipates

pates his miſery when he will find that ſhe is innocent. She bears ſickneſs and fatigue with patience and fortitude; and laſtly, what to moſt perſons would be a ſevere trial, ſhe relinquiſhes a crown without feeling any mortification.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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